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ST. PETERSBURG

AND

MOSCOW.

VOL. I.

ST. PETERSBURG

AND

MOSCOW:

A VISIT

TO THE

COURT OF THE CZAR.

85935

BY

RICHARD SOUTHWELL BOURKE, ESQ.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

THE EARL OF ST. GERMANS,

THE

FOLLOWING PAGES

ARE

GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

ANOTHER Tourist throws himself on the kindness of the already way-worn public. Another Author seeks to gain for himself and his adventures a small share of the attention that the world has so often kindly bestowed on literary wanderers. He has dared to hope that, even among the multitude of travellers who daily seek for public approval, he may find toleration—perchance favour.

It is a first attempt in letters—it will remain for his readers to say, whether it is to be, a last.

It tells of a new country, and a new people, governed on old principles—principles that have long since been discarded and condemned by most of the enlightened nations of the world. The Author seeks not to praise or to upbraid—such a course would be presumptuous in the extreme, for he is young in years, and totally inexperienced in politics. He, therefore, merely tells of the country and the people, as he himself saw them.

His sketches of Military, Political, or Educational Institutions are supported by statements, made in the hearing of the Author, by Russians.

These form but a small portion of the work, the rest is a Narrative of what the Writer saw and did.

Apologies for a good book are unnecessary, and are of no assistance to a bad one. Leaving therefore the production to stand by its own merits, or to fall by its own faults, he only begs for unprejudiced judgment and gentle criticism.

24, NORFOLK STREET,
JULY, 1846.

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ERRATUM.

In motto to Chapter IX. for "Virgil" read "Horace."

CHAPTER I.

The London Season—Reign of Fashion in English Society—The Author determines to travel—Is desirous of visiting Russia—Exaggerations respecting that country—The Russian Empire so differently described—Kindness of Baron B——.—Embarkation on board the Countess of Lonsdale—A sagacious Opinion.

ST. PETERSBURG

AND

MOSCOW.

CHAPTER I.

DEPARTURE.

Et puis la mode en est, et la cour l'autorise,
Nous parlons de nous-même avec toute franchise.

CORNEILLE.

On the evening of the Derby, 1845, I received news which compelled me to leave London for a short time. To state what the intelligence was would interest no one. My departure was occasioned by neither of the causes which so often, in the present day,

send young gentlemen on their travels—love and money—the superabundance of the former, or the scantiness of the latter. I had not lately been particularly extravagant of either, and with the exception of a few light ideas peculiar to the beginning of the season, and a bill or two, my heart and purse were in an unusually flourishing state. I will swear I was neither in love nor in debt.

The season was at its height. It is a wonderful time, that London season. A bustling, hustling, dancing, chattering, flattering, staring, whispering, gossipping, flirting, marrying time; when ladies and lawgivers, dandies and politicians, run riot in their respective spheres, and give themselves up to a carnival of separate pursuits—each seeking happiness or distinction, to obtain a place

or a pleasure, to secure a fortune or gratify an ambition, with equal earnestness and with equal determination.

It is a great sacrifice to a great goddess. The deity of the season is devotedly worshipped by thousands of votaries. The beautiful and the young; the rich and the powerful; the great and the gay; crowd round the dazzling shrine, and bend before the glittering idol. And well may they worship her, and bow to the goddess power; for in no city, or in no society, is fashion more adored—no where does she reign more triumphant. She is all-powerful; a guide to the young, and a director of age: she rules in London with undisputed sway. Bookworms may laugh at, and philosophers deride her power, but they, in their studies, little think that the same deity that presides at

the birth of a new shawl, or a freshly imported dance, may influence grave men, and graver interests.

Fashion now governs society, and the state of society certainly affects, in a great degree, the state of the commonwealth. But is London society, as it is at present, such an institution as should form the nucleus of English social intercourse? Is it not fictitious, hollow, and baseless? A gaudy, but still a great and gorgeous fabric, reared on an already melting foundation? Is not the goddess of the temple an imaginary divinity? Title, wealth, and talent, may each conduce to place a man or woman within the sacred circle of this fancied Paradise; but they are in no way indispensable qualifications for "the best sets."

Thus we see oftentimes, a titled scion of

nobility a laughing-stock and a bore. The millionnaire, whose wife would give half her fortune for the privileges of a J—y or a L—y, spending her life and wealth in attempting to attract the notice, or court the favour, of the priestesses of the temple of fashion; and the successful author, or brilliant orator, oftentimes unhonoured or unknown, and looked down on by beings infinitely inferior in virtue or talent, but of great consideration in the park or the party.

The qualifications for the position are indescribable; suffice it to see that they are attainable, and the attainment thereof certainly confers power and influence on the possessors. How long the present rule will continue is doubtful, but a power may one day arise that would overturn the temple and scorn its priests; and that would raise, as the

goddess of society, a graceful figure, a trifold deity of talent, wealth, and worth.

This is all very fine, but still I confess I like London; I like the beauties, the chaperons, and the dandies: the dinners, the balls, the opera, and the park; I like aristocracy and hate snobs; and so, notwithstanding my philosophy, I will decidedly go to London next year, if possible.

Being obliged to leave for a time this giddy whirl, and travel having always been my greatest pleasure, I immediately fixed upon Russia as the scene of my short tour, for many reasons. Having heard so many conflicting statements, so many astonishing stories of the hospitality of the nation—of the beauty of the towns, and the wild state of the country and people—of the greatness of the Czar, and the devotion of his

subjects; my heart bounded at the idea of seeing and judging for myself, the country of autocracy; the wastes, whose wild tenants, Peter spurred into a nation in a few years: the power which has of late exercised so great an influence over Europe and Asia, —the tomb of Napoleon's fortune, and the sepulchre of the independence of Poland.

I longed to see if the authors of "Revelations of Russia," the "Mysteries of Russia," "Russia in 1839," and in every other year, founded their stories upon fact; whether the country was a pleasant land or a hideous tomb, and whether 60,000,000 of men were in an abject state of blind submission to the inhuman and brutal wills of a tyrannical Emperor, and of harsh lords. I wished to see whether these gentlemen had composed interesting tales of tyranny and oppression

to gain notoriety and pelf; or, whether these books, so hostile to Russia, and so harrowing in their details, were the outcries of an oppressed and tortured nation, appealing to Europe for justice.

My stay was unfortunately very limited—so much so, that I sometimes wonder at my presumption in attempting to write a book containing an account of so short a tour; but I am not going to give to the world an abstruse political dissertation on Russian government, or a statistical description of the country, but a mere account of my own doings, and to tell plainly the little I saw and heard. If the book be found meagre in fact, and deficient in information, my only excuse is, that it is not written for statesmen or statisticians, but for idlers, gapers, and little thinkers, like myself, who look on the busy world, its business, and

its divisions, without saying much, but who endeavour to draw from the wisdom or the follies of others, equal instruction and amusement.

This is my only apology for asking the reader to look into the following pages—not that he will find therein any startling facts or appalling disclosures, or even many things that he may not previously have known; but I flatter myself that he may, perhaps, by their contents be induced to look upon the Black Eagle in a somewhat altered light—and that he will find the few facts of my short work uncontradicted by either his own experience, or the AUTHENTIC works of former travellers.

Russia is the country, of all others, the most difficult to describe: her government, her laws, her society, and institutions, present themselves in such very different lights to different visi-

tors. Some travellers will see in Russia a paternal and mild government; strict, but just laws; brilliant and polished society; benevolent and charitable institutions: while others (and among them the generality of modern authors) will see in Russia a vast charnel-house, a terrible prison, where confiscation, the knout, and Siberia, are for ever in constant view, and whose hideous forms present themselves to the stranger at every moment; where laws are but licences for oppression; society but a smooth and dark surface, that hides the horrors that lurk beneath; and the educational establishments of the country but vast *manèges* for the breaking-in of youthful slaves.

My intention is not to enter deeply on these subjects, but merely to relate, for the amusement of the reader, a few incidents of travel, leaving him to form his own opinions as

to the truth or falsehood of his former impressions. A galloping and steaming tour of eleven weeks, cannot contain much real information; but I fain would hope that its results may afford something that may help to while away an idle hour, and beguile the weariness of the train, or the tediousness of a voyage.

Having been fortunate enough to find a good companion, we were furnished with some excellent letters of introduction, through the kindness of Baron B., and others. To these letters, we owe all we saw, and all the hospitality we received in Russia. Thus furnished, we sailed from London in the Countess of Lonsdale steamer, on the 11th of June, 1845.

Many of my friends wondered at my choice of Russia for the scene of my travels. Some

said that it was an ugly, uninteresting country, that the inhabitants were stupid slaves, and modern barbarians; others declared that it was folly to travel, for pleasure, in a country where there were no inns. Some hinted at Siberia, made certain of the existence of a secret police, and said that spies as numerous as the eyes of Argus would beset our way; while one hirsute gentleman, more sensible than the rest, wisely opined that that must be a great country which was the source of bears' grease, and from whence Atkinson had derived his immortal fame. I took the advice of the latter, and, after a prosperous voyage of two days, we found ourselves admiring the new town of Hamburg.

CHAPTER II.

Our Fellow Passengers—Arrival at the Elbe—Hamburg —Account of the great Fire—Recent Improvements— The Hanse Towns—Travelling across Country— Monkish Architects — Ancient Paintings — Lubeck the seat of war—Its defence by Blucher—Plundered by the French—Arrival at Cronstadt—Civility of Russian Officials—Mis-statements respecting them— Sail up the Gulf of Finland—Appearance of St. Petersburg from the water.

CHAPTER II.

THE FREE TOWNS.

Urbs antiqua ruit, multos dominata per annos.

VIRGIL.

OUR fellow-passengers in the Countess of Lonsdale steamer were, as usual, a mixture of all nations. Among the number was a Russian diplomatist, who kindly gave us much information as to our future movements, and whose agreeable conversation and gentlemanlike manners alleviated, in a great degree, the tediousness of both this passage, and the longer voyage from Lubeck to St. Peters-

burg. We had the pleasure also of the company of a crowd of school-boys, six monkeys, twelve tortoises, and a laughing hyena. The latter was a hideous, one-eyed monster, whose continual roars fully justified Captain Marryat's simile of their being like the cries of a human being in distress—and I have no doubt that he would have devoured all attracted by them to his assistance, if he could. His wooden den did not look a bit too secure, and I anxiously speculated on the probability of a hyena hunt on the deck of the Countess of Lonsdale, or the contingency of the illustrious stranger insisting on his right to a berth as a cabin passenger. However, the beast contented himself with grinning and howling, in answer to the playful attacks of the young gentlemen, and we arrived in the Elbe without any accident, as, contrary to our expecta-

tions, the boys did not tumble overboard, and none of the wild beasts were enlarged.

The town of Hamburg is wonderfully improved by the great fire of 1840, the most destructive conflagration that has visited a European city for ages. The fire broke out in the centre of the town, and burnt for two days, in spite of all the exertions of the inhabitants. Churches, and buildings, public and private, fell a prey to the devouring element, with astonishing rapidity; the progress of the flames among the old and dry wooden houses, rendering all the exertions of the firemen nearly useless. Some spirit warehouses having been emptied of their contents, the liquors ran out into the stagnant pools in such quantities that they were actually for some time pumping strong grog on the burning houses, which, of

course, had the effect of increasing, instead of staying, the devastation.

The fire was shortly raging in four or five different places. A few bungling attempts were made in the early part of the day to stop it, by blowing up some of the houses; but being badly done, these efforts only added to the disaster, and increased the general panic. They were said to have been made by some English engineers; and this circumstance gave rise to the absurd report that the English, of whom there are five thousand resident in and about the town, were the incendiaries who had caused the disaster. A mob in a burning city, in the terrible state of excitement that such an awful calamity must produce, are ready to believe any rumour, however absurd and unfounded; the consequence of this report was, that the lower class of the inhabitants

became furious, and vowed vengeance against every Englishman they could catch. Several were shortly put into prison, and the Captain of the Countess of Lonsdale told me, that he had a very narrow escape of being severely maltreated by the enraged populace. He was recognized, as he was walking by himself, near the river, into which the good people of Hamburg threatened to throw him immediately, as a wicked and dangerous incendiary. He contrived to find refuge in a cellar, and was only delivered from his dangerous position by some Danish soldiers, who escorted him back to his vessel amid a shower of execrations and missiles of all sorts.

After the fire had desolated half the city, its progress in the principal direction was arrested by blowing up Streit's Hotel, which stood in the same situation as the present one

of that name. This enormous building crumbled to the ground in a moment, and thus the remaining side of the Jungfernstieg was saved, and the worst part of the fire extinguished. The scene after the conflagration, we were told, was awful. Thousands who had suddenly been deprived of home, food, raiment, and their entire property, were encamped without the ramparts, exposed to hunger and cold; many lost, absolutely, everything they possessed, and must inevitably have starved, but for the supply of provisions furnished gratuitously by the people of Altona, and the inhabitants of the surrounding country.

The people soon found out their mistake with regard to the English, for a large subscription was immediately entered into, and forwarded from London for their relief; and,

while the insurance offices of Hamburg were nearly bankrupt, and some totally unable to pay, England paid every farthing for which she was liable, which amounted altogether to an enormous sum. The consequence is, that the inhabitants insure now almost exclusively in British houses, and British credit stands as high in the Free Town as any where in the world.

Hamburg is now a fine flourishing city, and is the only town which, in any degree, retains a portion of the ancient wealth and power of the once mighty Hansa. The inhabitants, like those of the greater part of the north of Europe, (Russia proper, of course, excepted) profess the Lutheran faith, and a passenger in the steamer, connected with the town, who was a strict Methodist, and an ardent admirer of Sir Culling Eardly Smith,

loudly lamented the utter want of religion among the people and clergy. The latter, he said, are all Rationalists, who teach their flock that there is neither hell nor devil, and play cards on Sundays!—Iniquity, the bare recital of which made the hair of the pious relator almost stand on end, and horrified some nervous young ladies, who were about to become residents in what he called the Babylon of Lutheranism.

At twelve o'clock at night we started for Lubeck, and, though there is an excellent road the whole way, (a fact we were ignorant of at the time) our driver, for some unaccountable reason took us literally across the country; by this means we were almost in a state of dislocation when we arrived at Lubeck. Any thing more terrible than the series of bounds and jolts that we encoun-

tered that night can hardly be imagined, to which pleasures were added a slow and most imperturbable coachman, who insisted on feeding his horses once every hour, and whose mercy and affection for his beasts seemed to have quite effaced all feelings of consideration or pity for the Christian part of his charge. After we had gone more than half the way we got on a very good road, and found out, to our infinite annoyance, that we ought to have enjoyed the same the whole way.

Lubeck is a charming old city: the houses are covered with the quaint high roofs of the northern German towns; and the ramparts, which are now turned into pleasure-grounds and gardens, show how strong was once the capital of the Hansa. This was the meeting-place of the merchant law-givers of the fif-

teenth century, when nearly every city of importance from Reval to the Rhine, sent its deputies to Lubeck to deliberate on the affairs of this mighty republic. Haughtily and proudly did they dictate terms and treaties to emperors, princes, and nobles; but their ambition never descended to the conquest of barren states, and half populated countries; they only stipulated for a free exercise of commerce, and a safe transit for their goods. They had already thoroughly discovered the mighty power of trade, and laughed to scorn the feudal nobles of the age, who were squandering their lives and fortunes in petty fights of factions, and in endeavouring to acquire, at the point of the sword, inhospitable lands and empty castles. The Rathhaus at Lubeck was their Senate House, and they still show the Hall of Confe-

rence of the representatives of those sturdy traders.

The Dom Kirche is a fine gothic building, though sadly disfigured by rough and clumsy pews, placed in the body of the church. How curious it is that Protestants retain so little of the taste of their Roman Catholic ancestors in the decoration and arrangement of their places of worship, for we invariably see in all Lutheran countries the shapeless pew or ill-wrought monument destroying the fair proportions of vaulted aisles and Gothic pillars.

Those were fine old fellows the monkish architects, of the middle ages, the monuments of whose taste and talent are spread over the entire face of Protestant and Catholic Europe. They sought not in the gorgeous fanes they raised, to perpetuate their names as the inventors of a most beautiful

style to which their genius gave birth, or to lay up for themselves immortal architectural fame. Unknown and unnamed, they wrought for the glory of God and the good of His Church, and they begged from country to country gold to raise temples worthy of the worship of Jehovah. Their bones have long since mouldered in the crypts of their abbey churches, but the trophies of their genius will stand as everlasting mementos of their piety and perseverance, and many generations will still wonder at the talent of the obscure monk of olden time.

Many curious things are to be seen in this old church at Lubeck. There is a painting of The Last Judgment, not remarkable for its merit, a fact the artist seemed to have been quite aware of, for he has represented himself in the lower corner enjoying the

enviable position of being dragged into hell by a legion of devils—his mouth gaping in a hideous manner, exhibits the tortures he is undergoing, and every unclean looking imp, bogie, demon, or hell-cat that a poet or painter could have imagined, is dragging away nimbly at the limbs and body of the unfortunate draughtsman. There is also a beautiful picture on folding doors of wood, intended for an altar piece, representing 'The Passion' of our Saviour. It must have been done in an early age, as the author evidently had the ignorance of perspective peculiar to the first epoch of drawing. The likenesses are wonderfully kept up throughout, and it is considered a very good picture, notwithstanding some slight anachronisms of costume, for Pontius Pilate is represented as a fat burgomaster, the Roman soldiers as gallant cavaliers in full suits of plate armour, and

the Virgin Mary in a stiff ruff, laced boddice, and diamond stomacher.

The Marien Kirche is also a fine building, and contains a curious clock, and a picture of the Dance of Death—a mournful polonaise, wherein "old Time" has found a suitable partner in every age and every profession, and is handing to the grave with equal suavity the crowned king and peasant child.

This ancient town was the scene of the last struggle in the disastrous campaign of 1806. Defeated *en masse* in the double battle of Auerstadt and Jena, on the 19th of October, the Prussians sustained in detail a series of defeats, unparalleled in the history of war. Early in September, Prussia had sent forth to defend the fatherland, one hundred and thirty-two thousand of her sons. On the 5th of November, Marshal Blucher occupied Lubeck with twenty-four thousand men, the

only organized remains of that gallant host. Hotly pursued by the united corps of Bernadotte and Soult, sixty-thousand strong, the undaunted veteran placed the few heavy guns he had retained, to guard the principal gates, and made every preparation, his scanty means would allow, for a determined defence; but the old walls and crumbling ramparts, though defended with all the energy of despair, could not withstand the impetuous attack of the victorious French. In the face of a murdering fire, they broke down the old pallisades with their hatchets, and entered the outworks, from whence they penetrated into the town, and attacked those who were still bravely defending the gates in the rear.

Vainly did Blucher charge repeatedly down the König Strasse at the head of his hussars, for the enemy, who had now poured into the

city in great numbers, took possession of the houses, and fired from the roofs and windows on the Prussian cavalry. Every street was contested to the last; every house became the scene of a death struggle. Slowly and with difficulty the iron Marshal withdrew the scattered and beaten remnants of his troops from the blood stained streets, and towards evening collected five thousand men in the marshes on the Danish side. The next day seven thousand Prussians, with tears in their eyes, laid down their arms. The campaign was virtually at an end, and the kingdom of Prussia annihilated.

Lubeck on that night, though a neutral town, suffered all the horrors of a city taken by storm. The victorious French regarded little the inoffensive character of the inhabitants; and though their enemies were

subdued and driven away, the wild soldiery exercised all the barbarity and ferocity usual in such cases. The quiet burghers and their families saw their homes suddenly invaded by a licentious and victorious army, whose only law was their own unbridled desires. That night is said to have exceeded in horror any of the disasters of the campaign. The loss of life and property was immense, and adds another dark tale to the history of the thousand woes inflicted on Germany by the remorseless ambition of Napoleon.

How deeply, how bitterly, they were avenged, the field of Leipsic, the retreat of 1814, and the plains of Waterloo can tell. Nine years after, the memory of the miseries of the Jena campaign, steeled each heart and nerved each arm in the army of him who had defended Lubeck, and every Frenchman ridden

down on the terrible night of the 18th was regarded by the Prussian hussar as a just sacrifice to the manes of his countrymen.

In the afternoon we went on board the Naslednik at Travemunde, and were soon steaming over the dark waters of the Baltic, in the direction of St. Petersburg. What elevation of spirit, what bounding of the heart we feel when we find ourselves on the point of obtaining a long-wished for object, or of gaining the fulfilment of a long cherished desire! What perfect self-satisfaction steals over the senses when we find that we have succeeded in arriving near the distant point which has been the lighthouse of our meditations and wishes for some time! How doubly golden seems the object now nearly within our reach, and with what complacency do we look upon the slightest efforts we may

have made to obtain our end; how pleasantly do we consider all the little circumstances which have led to our good fortune, and how stupid do we consider others who may not have had either inclination or power to have done the same as ourselves. In short, what monstrous fine fellows do we think ourselves! and though the object may be still small and easily gained, we joyously opine, in the glorious buoyancy of success, that we should have obtained it all the same, had it been ten times as difficult.

Thus did I feel when we found ourselves under weigh for St. Petersburg, and plowing swiftly over that lead coloured sea—Russia, St. Petersburg with Moscow looming in the distance, we now knew were ours; and the next ground we were to tread was to be the land of the Sclavonian race. Strange characters of an unknown tongue we had already seen

on the vessel's stern, and the soft and flowing Russian now first broke upon our ear—a charming contrast to the harsh tones of the guttural German. I felt as if an early and long remembered dream was coming to pass in certain fulfilment, and I was certain that we were about to find new and unexpected pleasures.

We had now evidently got out of the beaten track of British tourists who in these days overrun most parts of the continent, and wondered at finding ourselves the only English on board the Naslednik. On the third evening of our voyage we first saw the glorious twilight of the north in all its beauty, and we paced the deck by its blue mysterious light till the rising sun in the east chased away the golden streaks of the west, and the dawn destroyed the still lingering lights of eve. The transition was so gradual that

it was scarcely perceptible, and we retired to rest, feeling as if we had already touched the confines of another world. In the morning we found ourselves sailing by a fine fleet moored in a long line before the batteries of Cronstadt. The Black Eagle floated proudly over his stone and wooden walls. The steamer cast anchor before the dock-yard, and we were *in Russia.*

All was now excitement on board our vessel. The custom-house officers were not yet up, and many were the occupations of our anxious fellow-voyagers. Some speculated on the dreaded ordeal they evidently expected to undergo; some gravely consulted on the proper answers they should make to the inquisitive officers of police; some were anxiously inspecting their passports for the fiftieth time; some glad to get home were in vain trying to

descry the distant towers of the metropolis, and were wondering what changes had taken place in the city, during their long absence; while many were busily engaged in the laudable employment of devising all sorts of little conspiracies against the custom-house, and taxing their ingenuity in order to evade the more trying taxation of their property.

Many were the temporary transfers of pelisses and cigars. Gentlemen walked about with parasols in their hands, and lace in their pockets, as if they considered such articles perfectly indispensable to a traveller's toilette. While we total strangers wondered when all this would end, and at last, were fully impressed with the conviction, that something extraordinary was going to happen; however, we amused ourselves with looking at the boats that passed, full of bearded peasants, and strange looking women, which

strike the traveller, who has never seen them before, as being the most curious and the dirtiest figures he has ever beheld.

A boat full of soldiers, with some officers in the stern, came on board in about two hours from the time of our arrival, and the vessel was immediately placed in military occupation. A soldier stationed himself at each gangway, while others dispersed themselves all over the ship:—a very imposing, but rather unnecessary proceeding, as there was no possible mode of escape for a refractory immigrant, except by jumping into the sea. The officers descended into the cabin, opened some very black looking volumes, and seated themselves in great form. All this looked very awful, and we of course imagined, both from what we saw, and all that we had read and heard, that we were

about to answer a series of unpleasant questions, and to be arraigned before this grand tribunal for the high crime of coming to Russia.

When E—'s name was called, he marched into the cabin with the air of a martyr; but, what was his surprise, when instead of inquisitive policemen and impertinent clerks, he found a civil and gentleman-like man, who merely asked him, whether he was travelling for pleasure, E— replied—Yes. The officer, then politely wished him a good morning and a pleasant tour! I was not asked a single question.

Thus ended the trial, which some recent travellers have declared to be so offensive to the feelings of a free-born stranger, and so degrading to a child of liberty. I carefully watched the examination of some of our

fellow-passengers, and had not the satisfaction of confirming any of my former fears, by hearing a question asked, that could have offended the most sensitive republican. I have certainly heard, that more strictness is sometimes shewn, and a series of provoking interrogatories put, that might in some degree justify M. de Custine's account of his entrance into Russia. But I also heard of a young Frenchman, who a few weeks before our arrival, thought the dignity of France outraged in his little person, and who absolutely refused to answer the simple question that was put to us! The consequence was, that the entire number of his fellow-passengers were detained for some hours, to their great inconvenience, until this spirited sprout of La Jeune France, consented to release them from the vessel by a sullen "*oui.*"

We had come in so early, that the delay, from the time we arrived until we got completely free from officials, was very long—nearly four hours. It seemed doubly so to us, who were panting with anxiety to reach the great object of our voyage, now so near. However, at length we got our tickets of leave to go on board a small steamer, the MOCKBA, which was to take us up to St. Petersburg. We then left the Naslednik in quiet possession of the army of occupation. The passage from the isle of Cronstadt, up the narrow part of the gulf of Finland, to the mouth of the Neva, takes about two hours, and is not distinguished in any way for beauty. On the right bank from Cronstadt, is seen the town of Oranienbaum, and a little further on, the gilded towers and park of Peterhoff;

these are situated on a small acclivity. But, after they are passed, the banks again become low, and present from a distance the only feature of the Finnish shores—interminable flat.

A golden spot sparkling in sunshine, a tall and taper spire, shooting like a needle to the sky, and rising apparently from the waters of the gulf, are the first signs of the great city that meet a traveller's eye. The dome of the church of St. Isaak and the tower of the Admiralty are seen from every approach to the town; for whether St. Petersburg has been sought by long journeying through boundless forests, and weary plains; or, by the waters of the Baltic, these giants of the city first appear on the horizon to welcome the stranger to the capital of the north. Soon dome after dome, spire and tower, rise

into view, and confirm the previous idea of the magnitude and greatness of the town; but the illusion dissolves on entering the Neva, for a succession of wooden stores, tallow, rope manufactories, and tanneries, are the only objects which meet the eye for some time; and it is not until the vessel gains the English quay that the great beauty of the city first presents itself.

We were actually beginning to wonder, whether this was really the unrivalled Neva, and this the far famed town. But on approaching the new bridge, the glory of the scene begun to open, and a part of the great Winter Palace appeared to tell us, we were at last in the City of the Czar.

CHAPTER III.

Exaggerated praise—First impressions of St. Petersburg — The Izaak Church — Equestrian Statue of Peter the Great—Population of St. Petersburg as seen in the Newski Perspective—Want of Hotels—Letters of Introduction—Suburban residences of the Nobility — Fruits and Flowers — Private Gardens thrown open to the Public—Dramatic performances supported by Government—Journalism in Russia—Errors of M. de Custine—True story of the Princess Trubetzkoi.

CHAPTER III.

THE CAPITAL OF THE NORTH.

Suppose ME then at Petersburg, suppose
That pleasant capital of painted snows.

BYRON.

How seldom it is that the greatest beauties of nature, or art, concerning which much has been said, or written, realize, on inspection, the expectations our fancy may have formed of their excellence. Many scenes of grandeur or loveliness fail to strike the beholder with admiration at first sight, and require to be well

known before they are appreciated, while the traveller often wonders at his own want of taste, when, after many endeavours, he is sometimes unable to discover the transcendant scenic glory raved of by the author of a guide book, or a tour.

The beauties of the City of Palaces are of that kind, which demand and deserve acquaintance, and I do not think the first *coup-d'œil* from the river would ever realize the brilliant anticipations that a stranger has invariably formed of St. Petersburg. The distance between the different objects of beauty, and the real width of the river is such, that it is impossible for the eye to comprehend the view at once as in a picture, but is rather obliged, first to rest upon the details of the Panorama, and then to connect them gradually and separately. Thus the mind is

disappointed in finding no great, or combined impression which it can paint on its memory; and though the objects themselves may be severally beautiful, they are invariably separate masses, and are remembered more as a palace, or a church, than as the Place of Saint Isaak or Alexander, or the quays of the Neva. There is so much street, water, and sky, that there is little harmony of colouring, or unity of beauty in the different views of St. Petersburg.

The custom-house officers again came on board, again inspected our passports, and, after another hour's delay, we left our things to be searched in a room of the Commercial Club, bade adieu to our fellow passengers, and landed on the English Quay. Our first exploit was to lose our way; taking the left instead of the right,

we wandered down the quay; but we did well, for unexpectedly we came into the Place of St. Isaak, and in a moment found ourselves before the famous statue of Peter on his rearing charger, and read in golden letters, on the great mass of granite that forms its pedestal, the sole inscription, "Petro Primo—Catherina Secunda."

Never have I seen a statue more worthy of its subject, or more characteristic of its giver. The powerful steed, full of nature and fire, seems proud of his Imperial rider; and the stern form of the Father of Russia, with arm outstretched towards the mighty city his genius gave birth to, seems still to watch over and guard the monuments of his greatness. Critics and dilettanti may find fault with the details of the work, and lose, in the examination of legs and arms, all ideas

beyond a mere anatomical survey. In those subjects I am unlearned, and ignorant of the technicalities of art; but the "thunder stricken Nurse of Rome" now standing with the halo of three thousand years around her, the column of the Place Vendôme with the record of its countless victories, or the glorious Lion of Lucerne, his dying paw still guarding the lily's shield, do not image forth more grandeur of action, or more glory of success, than does that brazen figure on its rocky stand.

There, on that spot, which the magic of his wizard word changed from a morass of the forest into a splendid and populous city, where every object still breathes his spirit, and bears his name, does the image of the magician stand, still telling what persevering energy and inflexibility of purpose can accom-

plish; what man can dare and man can do.

Lost in the thousand associations of ideas, which the sight of this statue called to my mind, I wandered back by the quay, regained the club, but soon forgot the founder of the empire, in anxiety for the safety of my carpet bag, and solicitude for the welfare of my portmanteau. The search of our effects was neither severe nor long; and, under the guidance of a *valet-de-place* who had already engaged us, we established ourselves at Mrs. Wilson's.

In the evening we wandered forth, and many and varied were the objects that astonished us at every turn. We walked by the Church of St. Isaak, the Admiralty, the Winter Palace, to the great street called the Newski Perspective, where we first saw, in

numbers, the population and equipages of this scarcely European town. New objects, figures, and costumes, passed us in such quick succession, that we were nearly bewildered at meeting, in a moment, such a crowd of novelties.

The light droschkies, their fine horses, trotting magnificently beneath their wooden arches, with the pretty, barb-like animal cantering at the side; the carriages of the higher classes, drawn by four horses and driven by a bearded coachman and postillion, in their flowing caftans; the mugiks or labourers, in their sheepskin coats, returning from their day's labour; the Russian nurse in her curious and picturesque costume; the various uniforms of the numerous soldiery, and the solitary driver leading a long line of light carts,

laden with merchandize, and starting on his weary journey, altogether form a street scene, which presents as great a number of novel objects to the view of the English traveller as any other town in the world.

There are two lines of wooden pavement in this street, and the different vehicles glide noiselessly over its smooth surface, while from its great width, the passers-by never present at any time the appearance of a crowd. There was an absence of animation, and of all appearance of business in those who were driving or walking in this street, that struck me much, having just come from the busy hive of London, where occupation is imprinted on the features and movements of every person one meets.

We wandered about in all the luxury of feeling that our travel was even already re-

paid, and having taken full advantage of the traveller's privilege of undisguised staring, we returned home by the blue twilight, wondering at all the strange, and as yet unknown objects that we had seen. It is an extraordinary fact, that notwithstanding the great number of travellers who must in summer visit St. Petersburg, and the wealth of many of its inhabitants, no one has yet succeeded in establishing an hotel, conducted in the manner of other countries. The great buildings, kept by the Germans, and French, are dirty lodging houses; and the English places for the reception of travellers, are small boarding-houses; these are sufficiently comfortable, but are totally deficient in most of the luxuries, deemed at the present day requisite in other countries. Such establish-

ments, however, are vastly superior to the large barracks called "Hôtel garni," which are huge and unclean caravanserais where the stranger enters and takes up his abode, but never finds a vestige of "the warm welcome of an inn." However we found the boarding house of the Galernoy Oulitza, quite good enough for all our purposes, and the hostess as civil and obliging, as an English landlady almost always is.

Our first business on the day after our arrival, was to leave the letters of introduction we had brought from London. What a pleasure it is to feel, on entering a town wherein we are perfect strangers, that we bear in our pockets pieces of paper which will find, and make friends who will bid us welcome to their land!

An introduction by letter, I think, is generally more effectual than a common presentation, and friendly feeling and intercourse spring quicker to a kind recommendation, from a distant friend, than to a bow in a ball room, or a stiff greeting followed by a few common place observations; besides, personal appearance cannot be against us in a letter of introduction. We certainly fully appreciated the value of good letters, in the kindness expressed, and hospitality afforded, by all whose acquaintance we were fortunate enough to make in St. Petersburg.

The higher classes of the inhabitants desert the town in spring, as soon as the leaves appear on the trees, but they do not visit in summer their different estates, or distant castles, and what we should call a country life is totally unknown to most

Russians of high rank. The islands of the Neva, covered with fir and birch trees, intersected with branches of the river and canals, and studded with pretty little wooden villas, form the scene of their villeggiatura. To these retreats the *beau monde* adjourn their dinners, balls, and receptions, and continue, in their cottages of the islands, very much the same routine of pleasure as in their palaces of St Petersburg.

When we first arrived at Mrs. Wilson's, we inquired where the different people lived to whom we had letters. We were told that they were in the country; these tidings disappointed us very much, as we knew of the great distances in Russia, and imagined that perchance, one of our future friends might be ruralizing in the neighbour-

hood of Odessa, another might have retired to the confines of Poland, and a third might be found in the vicinity of Archangel, we were, therefore, at first, rather disheartened, as we conceived our letters to be useless; but what was our surprise, when on inquiring at what distance from the town the residence of Prince D— was, they told us about three versts, and that all the other people to whom our letters were addressed lived close by! We immediately got into our calèche, and a drive of two hours enabled us to leave our letters and to see the islands, which are almost pretty.

The Island of Yrlagen, a small imperial demesne, is laid out with great taste, in walks, drives, and pleasure-grounds and

forms a favourite place of resort for the inhabitants of the islands. The little gardens and parterres belonging to each of the villas, are very small, and badly kept; the impossibility of inducing grass to grow sufficiently thick, and of the proper kind to make a shorn lawn, gives an untidy look to all Russian pleasure grounds; and at the botanical garden, the only place where the thing is attempted, the grass around the flower beds is sown every spring. But they make up for the want of good out-door gardens by the excellence of their hot-houses; every house is filled with flowers, and we generally found, in the morning, the lady of the house seated in her drawing room, in a little bower of rare and beautiful plants, the sides of which were of mahogany trellis work,

covered with creepers, whose odour filled the entire building.

Their fruits are also magnificent, and at all Russian entertainments melons, grapes and peaches, are found in the greatest profusion and of the best quality; we also heard that it was not uncommon to see strawberries and all summer fruits in the confectioners' shops of the Newski Perspective, at a time when there is twenty degrees of frost by Reaumur.

The inhabitants of these little villas make the most of their short summer: they spend the greater part of their time in the open air, dine early, generally in a portico or summer-house, and either drive through the different islands, or row on the waters of the Neva, till a late hour in the evening; they have none of those delightful

ideas of seclusion, so general in our country. They do not appreciate retirement; I have often seen a party dining close to the high road, or sitting in their houses in the evening, with the windows wide open, enjoying the sight of the different passers by, and caring little for being duly stared at in return. The same feeling makes the Russians so kind about allowing the public entrance into their domains.

If a gentleman in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg possesses grounds or gardens, large and handsome enough to be a source of pleasure to his poorer fellow-creatures, he does not build a ten foot wall round his place and take every precaution against even a strange eye penetrating into the mysteries of his habitation; but kindly allows everybody to enjoy it as well as

himself—sometimes under restrictions, but more frequently quite freely; and I heard that rarely, if ever, the people so treated, who resort to private gardens in great numbers, do mischief or commit depredations; for being accustomed to enjoy constantly the pleasure-grounds of their superiors, they never think of injuring the property of those who indulge them, in so kind and useful a manner.

Thus the private gardens at Ochta are, every fine evening, filled with hundreds of people, and an excellent German band play for their amusement, a small sum being collected at the entrance by one of the musical troop, and wholly appropriated to their use; at Pergola, also, and at many other places, every person may walk about

and enjoy the fine weather, in pretty gardens and shady groves, without the slightest interruption.

There is a large wooden theatre in the Kammenoi Ostrof, or Island of Stones, where an excellent French company perform three times in the week, during the summer. It is not well attended, but as all theatrical establishments in Russia are under the immediate management of government, the costumes, scenery, and properties, are more really handsome than in any other country I have seen. The costumes particularly struck us as being extremely good; the absence of tinsel and of all the general shabbiness of stage dress greatly increases the appearance of reality, in a good play, and is particularly noticed in the Vaudevilles and light pieces

wherein the French are so unrivalled; there are boxes and galleries like those in other theatres, but the pit is filled with numbered arm chairs, in which we reclined very comfortably and enjoyed the excellent acting of Berton, and the drolleries of Rouget.

The funds devoted to theatrical purposes must form an immense item in the yearly budget of the Empire, as no expense is spared to induce first-rate artists to grace their boards; but I never saw any thing like "a house" in Russia; the theatre in summer is almost deserted, so that, even were it permitted, no private person could ever undertake the management of a play-house, and some of our friends seemed greatly surprised when we told them, that no sum is devoted by government to dramatic purposes in England. The drama and the

public press are peculiarly under the surveillance of the police; the latter is represented by a sort of demi-official Gazette, and contains most of the ingredients of a journal, except news,—a commodity exceedingly scarce in Russia. A proof copy of the so-called newspaper is sent to General D—'s house on the evening before its publication, in order that it may be duly inspected by that important personage, who is answerable for its contents; and such a thing as abuse of a public officer, or an opinion on a political subject, is never seen in a Russian print. They published this year some intelligence of the exploits of Count Woronzoff's army in the Caucasus, but it was reckoned a great wonder, and caused a sensation in the town, as such a proceeding is quite unusual. If a person is desirous of knowing

much of what is going on in the world, he must go constantly into society, as that is the only mode of hearing any thing; in spite, however, of the precautions of the government, we heard European news discussed very freely at the different parties in the islands.

A story related in conversation is not always remarkable for complete exactness, and it is very difficult to discover the real facts of an event, when each account differs materially, according to the disposition of the narrator, and varies in proportion to his or her taste for the marvellous, or for matter of fact. In conversation with foreigners, I fear patriotism sometimes carries the Russian gentleman a little beyond the confines of exactness; and conflicting accounts of many things often perplexed me, in a country,

where the only mode of obtaining information is by word of mouth; but this kind of exaggeration is almost excusable, as it is natural that people should endeavour to hide the deficiencies, and enhance the perfections of their country as much as possible. In Russia the temptation to make highly-coloured statements is greater than in most countries, for the patriotic relater has little fear of absolute contradiction before his eyes; there is no danger of a different, and perhaps truer statement of a fact, or account of an event, appearing in a newspaper to shake the credulity of his hearers, or to provoke a more close inquiry into stories which generally bear a plausible impress of truth.

This is a great cause of the incorrectness of most books that have been written upon

Russia and Russians. Nothing but a long residence in the country would qualify men to write the sort of books we so constantly read, as most works of the kind have been published by persons who have either, like myself, made a short stay, or whose opinions have been dictated, or, at least, directed by private pique or fancied wrongs.

M. de Custine's "Russia in thirty nine" has made a great sensation in Europe, and has been almost universally read. In spite of the egotism, vanity, superficialness, and disregard of truth which pervade the whole book, if we could manage to leave out the stories of individuals, politics and the writer's own deductions and absurd inferences, we should find perhaps the best picture of the present state of Russia that has been given to the world; this proceeding, however, would

sadly curtail the fair proportions of the author's volumes, and the four stately tomes would probably be found reduced to one; but truth would be an immense gainer, and M. de Custine would go down to posterity as a clever and observant traveller, whose beautiful and classic French had well described a new and curious country; instead of a spiteful, and inaccurate author, whose hatred of his subject appears in every line of his book, and who requited condescension and hospitality with vulgar mockery of favours received, boastful reminiscences of his own momentary importance, and rancorous, and indiscriminate abuse of every person, animal, and thing that he had the misfortune to meet with in Russia.

Any person reading the book must be impressed with the unaccountable bitterness

that pervades the whole work, which discolours every fact mentioned, every impression recorded, and the most sincere hater of Russia, her system of government, and her people, cannot for one moment hope that a well-thinking or unprejudiced person could read the philippics of M. de Custine, with either belief in his stories, or respect for his character; notwithstanding, he has, with rare talent, undoubtedly managed to find fair, and in some cases very plausible foundations for his tales of Russian cruelty, deceit, and misgovernment.

His description of landscape, and town scenery, is very graphic, and correct, but spoiled by an effeminate recital of petty woes and exaggerated descriptions of dangers passed through, and only escaped from by his own valour, and the presence of mind

of his faithful Achates, Antonio. His terrible rencontre with the huge elephants is very humorously described; and would be worthy of Punch did we not know by previous acquaintance with the author that it is intended to be received as a grave relation of a providential escape, and another offering to the courage of his valet. His fears of Siberia, his terror of the espionage of his Feldjäger, and dread of a discovery of his papers by the police, (an event which he seems to think would have been attended with terrible consequences to himself, and danger to the Imperial Government), are too farcical, and savour so much of the bootless bravery of Bombastes Furioso, that they are quite amusing.

These scenes so graphically described, might escape general censure, and be attributed to

affectation, or a love for the marvellous common to most travellers, but the author of Russia in thirty-nine, has committed graver errors. The most serious part of his literary delinquency, is his account of the attentions of the Empress, and the story of the Princess Trubetzkoi. His boastful detail of her Majesty's kindness, and his public repetition of the different conversations that took place, almost privately between himself, and that amiable and august personage, is no less than an ungentlemanlike breach of trust, a vulgar bravado, the publication of which infringes the sacred rites of hospitality, and is a tissue of impertinent gasconade. He was undoubtedly received with the usual kindness, and consideration, that is so characteristic of the Imperial Court, and that we, and many others, have been

equally honoured with. But, how did M. de Custine repay it? By endeavouring to persuade the world that the Empress made HIM a confidant of her crowned unhappiness, and that the Emperor consulted him on affairs of state! Why the notion is ridiculous in the extreme, and evidently exhibits a weakness of mind that is to be deplored, and a constitutional vanity that is quite funny.

He is entertained by, dines, and converses with each member of the reigning family, he acknowledges their condescension; but no sooner is out of the precincts of the Court, than he tells the world that their life is frivolous, their conduct servile, that the great master is a confirmed and hereditary tyrant, and that the mistress is wearied of her life. I know by experience that his unwarranted attacks on, and ungrateful vituperation of the

country whereof the Emperor, *his friend*, is ruler, have earned for him, the execration and contempt of all right thinking men, the bitterest enemies of Russia not excepted. But, when a traveller who has partaken of the same hospitality as himself, reads this book, it makes his blood boil to think that statements of such extraordinary falsity should go forth to the world as facts supported by a great name and literary reputation.

The real version of the story of the Princess Trubetzkoi was told to me by a well-informed Swede, who holds a high situation in the naval service of his country, and whose patriotism, every one must know, does not allow him to be a great lover of either Russia or her ruler. He told me that he had heard it from excellent authority, and I hardly think that an hereditary enemy of Russia would

invent this story for the mere purpose of confuting M. de Custine. The history of the Princess Trubetzkoi, of her sufferings in exile, her noble self-devotion, and the miserable state of her uneducated children, whom, notwithstanding the repeated entreaties of their mother, the Emperor refused to permit to be brought to St. Petersburg for their education, forms the great catastrophe of "Russia in 39." It is the crisis of the plot, the terrible and dark fact, whereon the greater part of the tragedy hinges, and the crime that stamps the Emperor as a tyrant and a remorseless ruler.

The awful discovery that the children of the Prince who was exiled, first to the mines, and afterwards to Siberia, for his participation in the rebellion of 1826, are still languishing in slavery, uneducated, and un-

cared for, affects the author so much, that he defers his journey to Moscow—sadly *but silently* (for he has a very proper dread of Siberia for himself) he grieves over the wretched outcasts, and refuses to patronize the Emperor at the reviews of Borodino, because he has now found him out to be a wicked and revengeful man, who visits the sins of the fathers on the children, and refuses the humble prayers of a noble lady, that her children should receive an education suited to their high birth and ancient descent.

But the communication that passed between his Majesty and the Princess Trubetzkoi, is said to have been of a very different nature. The Grand Duke Cesarewitch demanded of his father, a boon, as a birthday present, some few years ago, which the Emperor readily promised to grant.

The favour the young Grand Duke craved, was that his Majesty should command that all the children of the unfortunate exiles of 1826, should be brought to St. Petersburg to be educated in a proper manner at the expense of the government. An order to that effect was made out, and carried into execution, but the Princess Trubetzkoi fearing the separation from her offspring, and feeling herself capable of conducting their education in Siberia, wrote to petition the Emperor, that her children might still remain with her! Whether the request was granted, or not, I cannot tell, but this was the only communication ever made by that unfortunate lady to the Emperor Nicholas.*

* Since the above has been in the press, I have seen that the Quarterly Review, in an excellent and able article on M. de Custine's work, relates the true history

Such is the tale as I heard it, from a foreigner, and a disinterested person; and as something of the same kind is mentioned by M. Gretch, in his pamphlet, I have no doubt of its being perfectly true. Now what excuse can M. de Custine have for publishing so wicked a fabrication, or how could he have given to the world, so serious a calumny without being more certain of the truth and faith of his informant? The fact is, that he was too glad to seize on any story, however unsubstantiated, that could add a

of the Princess Trubetzkoi. I was not before aware that the facts had been so generally made public, or I should not have inflicted so palpable a repetition on the patience of my readers. I therefore crave the pardon of all who have read and known the story. But I rejoice that those who may not have seen the article in question will find my statement corroborated by such high and undoubted authority.

stone to the battery that he imagined he was raising up, to pour a storm of destruction on the character of every thing within the shadow of the Black Eagle's wing.

I could cite a hundred other instances of the wilful inaccuracy of the book, but as I am not writing a critique on M. de Custinê, I have merely, as a matter of justice to Russia, mentioned the above, in order to show how little reliance is to be placed on his statements or his stories. The book is a picture of Russia, correct in many parts, but so bedimmed and shaded with exaggerated statements, abuse, and falsehood, that the traveller will, with great difficulty, recognize the Russia, that he himself discovers to be the same country as the Russia of 1839. I do not write for the purpose of abusing M. de Custine, or of answering the thousand

charges that he brings against the country; but I cannot avoid alluding to a work which at present holds so unmerited a position in European literature, and which has not been answered except by a mere string of contradictions by M. Gretch.

It is impossible that a Russian, properly qualified, and with the requisite kind of information, at command, could answer this book, for it attacks a system of government, whose basis is secrecy, and whose iron rod is generally wielded by an almost invisible hand; a Russian official, therefore, must infringe the first rules of his profession, by publicly refuting most allegations that are brought against his government. For this reason Russia is fair game for every misanthropical or discontented spirit who chooses to pour

forth his spite on paper, or to revenge some fancied insult, by a violent attack on the country.

They all invariably appear to take, as their hypothesis, the fact of the non-existence of crime in that country of tyranny; they seem to wish to persuade us that Siberia is in every case the reward of patriotism, virtue, and honesty, and that these are the only qualities that entitle a Russian to the wrath of the Czar. No where, among all the harrowing relations of exile, confiscation and death, that I have so often read, do I meet with an account of the wicked receiving the just punishment of their crimes, and in no instance do I find that a man was, in their opinion, rightly judged. If this absence of crime be true, what a paradise Russia would then be, after a good purification (perhaps in

the French revolutionary manner) and an indiscriminate extermination of every thing that is now noble, and great, in the land; but if they really want reform, they must find a more experienced, and practical politician than M. de Custine to carry out this great work, for in his confession of political faith, in the few last sentences of his first volume, he avows himself to be a radical in Russia, and a faded aristocrat in France; an unfortunate line of hermaphrodite politics, as absurd as it is impossible, as affected as it is Quixotic.

But enough of de Custine and his comrades. I should advise people who intend to visit Russia, to read the book, for, notwithstanding all its deficiencies, it is written in that easy, and picturesque style, that is so

rare; and an observant traveller will, without difficulty, be able, after a short tour, to separate the evil from the good, the true from the false.

CHAPTER IV.

Churches in St. Petersburg—Their characteristics—Warlike ensigns in Russian places of Worship—Russian Priests and religious Ceremonies — The Patriarch Nicon—His extraordinary Power—Church of St. Izaak, of St. Peter and St. Paul — Noble Mourners—Cathedral of our Lady of Cazan—Church of St. Alexander Newskoi — Prince E. D. — His extreme kindness—Censorship—Punch in Russia—License of the Press in England.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHURCH.

And many a humbled banner droops
Round many an altar high,
While the conquering Eagle proudly stoops
O'er the spoils of victory.

AMONG the first objects in St Petersburg which we visited were the numerous churches. These edifices generally resemble one another exactly in form. They are built in the shape of a Greek cross, and surmounted by a dome in the centre. In the interior, one arm of the cross is shut off

by a gorgeous screen adorned with stately pillars, and containing large folding doors covered with gilded carving. The space behind the screen is the sanctum sanctorum, and always contains a figure of our Saviour in a glass case, which is made use of in certain ceremonies. The altar is also here, and though we found no difficulty in gaining admission to the mysteries of their shrines, no woman is ever permitted to enter the sacred precincts, while the carpet in front of the altar is never trodden but by the priest alone.

The whole interior is always devoid of seat or pew, as the worshippers of the Greek Religion pray standing; but there is in every church a place set apart for the Emperor to stand in, which is raised above the floor, and usually covered with a canopy or small

dome. All the churches in St. Petersburg except that of the Smolnoi monastery are filled with banners, horse tails, keys of fortresses, and other spoils of various wars. Turkish, Persian, Polish, Swedish, and French colours are grouped round the massive columns; keys of vanquished cities, and insignia of conquered Generals adorn the walls; while over the trophies of her victorious children soars in triumphant majesty the Black Eagle of the north, and seems here to be nearly as sacred a symbol as the cross of Christ. Truly the God of the Russian is a God of war!

But I love not those displays of military glory in such a place; for though it may be a lawful, nay an imperative duty to render thanks to the God of battles for having given victory to our arms, the house of the God

of Peace is not a place for storing up the emblems of the defeat of many nations, or for displaying the records of slaughter and of woe; trophies of his victorious exploits may droop gloriously over the warrior's tomb, but they are out of place in a building dedicated to constant worship—where the new commandment that we should love one another ought continually to be sounded forth in the ears of men.

The Greek churches contain no statues; but pictures of different saints are hung round in great profusion; the face, feet, and hands of the holy personage whom the painting represents are the only parts of the body or drapery visible, as the rest of the picture is covered with either gold or silver plates and sometimes studded with precious stones of immense value; so we generally,

in the richest pictures, see the face of the holy departed peeping through a pavement of gems, the hands springing from a diamond wrist band, and the feet protruding from an emerald petticoat.

The churches and their treasures are always guarded by one or two old soldiers, who lie on a bench near the door rolled in their sheep skins, and who are delighted to show everything to strangers in expectation of the copecks that usually reward their civility. The service is chanted, and the continual crossing and genuflexion practised by the worshippers far exceed what I have seen in Catholic countries. The sacred music is generally excellent, and the imperial choir, whereof I shall hereafter speak, is the finest in the world. Instrumental music is totally

excluded from their services; sermons form a small part of their sacred rites, and teaching is more valued in Russia than preaching. A short discourse of ten minutes four times in the year, is the only homily which a Greek priest ever delivers to his congregation; but I hear that the visits of the minister to the homes of his flock are very frequent.

The doctrines of the Greek differ widely from those of the Latin Church, and in some respects are deemed by Protestants to be more free from error. She enjoins marriage on her clergy as a duty, and a man must have entered into the happy state of matrimony before his admittance to the order of priest; but should he have the misfortune to lose his wife, he cannot marry

again. The confessional is unknown, and both elements are administered to the laity in the Sacrament of the Lord's supper. Transubstantiation is modified into what is called consubstantiation; but they believe in the doctrine of the intercession of saints in the widest acceptation of the term, and the number of festivals dedicated to the holy dead, exceed in number those of the Roman calender.

The dignitaries of the Russian church are invariably chosen from among the monks; and the secular clergy seldom rise beyond the grade of parish priest, who are not, I believe, in general well educated men, but who live completely among their flocks, and consequently their influence over the lower classes is unbounded. The office of Patriarch having been

abolished by Peter the Great, the church is now governed by three metropolitans, who reside at St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kief. The Russian ecclesiastics, before that time, are said to have lived in great indolence and they maintained their authority over the people, not by instruction or example but by prohibiting all religious controversy which they punished with death. Public instruction was given but twice in the year, and that consisted only of a portion of some homily translated from one or other of the Greek Fathers.

The Patriarchs exercised, in those days, unbounded power and condemned to death without appeal such of the community as they judged guilty of profligacy or immorality ; the Patriarch Nicon, in the time

of Alexius Michailovitch, the father of Peter, was deposed from his dignity in a full Synod, for ambition, and turbulence; he desired to raise his chair above the Imperial throne, claimed the right of sitting in the Senate by the side of the Czar, and declared that neither peace nor war could be made without his consent. The Emperor, finding himself unable to depose this Greek Thomas à Becket, by his own power, convoked a Synod of all the dignitaries of the Church, and having accused Nicon of receiving money from the Poles, he was deposed, and confined for the rest of his days in his monastery; but the monks still regard him as a saint of the highest order.

Peter found so powerful a dignity too dangerous for his autocratic plans, and

among other great reforms, abolished the office, and established a Synod for the decision of all religious matters. This Synod is composed of a president, (which office the Czar evidently intended to have filled himself, as he never appointed any one to that dignity,) of a vice-president, who must be an archbishop, six counsellors, who are bishops, and of six archimandrites, who have the quality of assessors. The monasteries are in some instances extremely rich, and many of the monks are said to be learned men; but I cannot say that I heard much of the results of their literary or scientific labours. They never eat meat, are not divided into different orders like those of the Roman Catholic Church, and seem to be principally employed in celebrating the different festivals and

saints days, with which the Greek calendar abounds.

The churches of St. Petersburg are generally handsome buildings, surmounted with a gilded or painted dome; on the top of this glistens a golden cross, standing on the crescent, emblematical of the numerous Russian victories of ancient days, over the Mahommedan Tartars, and battles gained in defence of their faith. But the Russian churches are far inferior in size and beauty, to similar buildings in the rest of Europe, and the church of St. Isaak, although a magnificent but as yet an unfurnished structure, is not what we should suppose the metropolitan cathedral of the Greek religion ought to be. This building, commenced by Catherine the Second, was continued in brick by the Emperor Paul;

but the original intention of facing the entire building with marble, being adhered to by the present and late Emperors, the works in brick were taken away, and the present great marble structure built.

It is in the form of a cross, whose four arms are each fronted with a magnificent portico, supported by red granite columns, over which is a colossal basso-relievo in bronze. The whole is surmounted by a lofty gilded dome, from whence a most glorious view of the town, the river, and the surrounding country is obtained. The interior is far from finished; but if the present design is carried out, it will be a mass of precious metals, and stones.

We went to see, at the manufactory, the malachite columns for the front of the Eikonast, or screen; these are fifty feet in

height, and will far exceed anything that has yet been done, in that beautiful fabric. All the iron and bronze work has come from the foundries of Mr. Baird, a Scotchman, residing in St. Petersburg, through whose kindness we were enabled to see every thing connected with this great work.

Notwithstanding that the Russians are naturally so proud of this immense structure, I can hardly say that it quite answered our expectations. Whether it is that excessive simplicity defeats its purpose, or that the great size of the building is lost in the enormous place wherein it stands, I certainly did not look at it with the same feelings of awe, and exquisite admiration, with which I have regarded the grandeur of St. Peters, or the

elaborate beauty of Milan, Westminster, York, or the scarcely begun Cologne.

The church of St. Peter and St. Paul, the fortress, contains the remains of Peter the Great and his successors; they are not buried in vaults, but the stone coffins are placed on the floor of the church, covered with black cloth, under which is generally another covering of white silk, or satin embroidered in gold.

The youthful daughter of the Emperor, whose fatal illness shortened His Majesty's late visit to England, is the last of the imperial family who sleep here. Her coffin was covered with fresh, and fragrant flowers, tokens of affection, from many who knew, and loved her; and numbers daily visit the last resting place of her whose early death was so severe a blow to her family. The

sight of stately and high born dames stooping over, and praying by her early grave, answered to my mind, in a moment, all the reports of the unpopularity of the reigning family among the upper classes in Russia. And to that gloomy church unseen and unknown many a fair daughter of the Russian noble often comes, to pour forth her supplications for the repose of the dead, and the safety of the living, and to strew roses on the tomb of one, who young and gay as themselves, has died when most happy and when most beloved.

The Cathedral of our Lady of Cazan, contains among thousands of banners, and spoils of war, the Field Marshal's baton of Davoust, preserved in a glass case. It was not taken in action, but

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picked up on the snow, by some wandering Cossacks. This, indeed, was the manner in which most of the spoil of the French army, that now decorates, in such quantities, the churches of St. Petersburg and Moscow, was acquired. Old Kutusoff is buried here, and his coffin stands in the shadow of the humbled banners of his enemies. He was a brave, and prudent general, and with all the immense advantages which the climate gave his army in that terrible pursuit, it is marvellous that one Frenchman ever returned home. He carried his Fabian tactics to the greatest extreme, and I cannot help thinking that had a more dashing and enterprising General been in his place, he would have hung the sword of Napoleon by the baton of Davoust.

The Church of St. Alexander Newskoi

contains the bones of that holy man in a silver coffin of immense value. He was a Czar and a saint, who flourished in the thirteenth century, and whose memory is still greatly revered by the devout in Russia. Murray's Hand-Book mentions a curious fact concerning his relics. Peter the Great being anxious that his new town should contain the well preserved remains of the holy man, which are held in such estimation by the pious, ordered him, coffin, and all, to be brought to St. Petersburg from his ancient resting place Gorodichetche on the banks of the Volga. The saint, I suppose, finding the air of Finland rather damp, was no sooner placed in his new abode, than he got up, and went home again by himself;—a proceeding which was looked upon as a great miracle,

and whereby his numerous worshippers were much edified; however Peter with unholy obstinacy, sent again for the refractory saint, and gave his guardians, the monks, to understand, that he would knout them all, if the saint indulged in any of his peripatetic fancies for the future; the consequence is, that St. Alexander has remained snug in his silver coffin ever since, not wishing I presume to expose his worthy friends to danger on his account.

In the cemetery of this convent, many of the greatest families of Russia bury their dead; and enormous sums are paid for permission to repose in this holy ground. The graves are very close together, and the new tombs are always covered with flowers. The anchor at the foot of the cross, is a favorite emblem, and is placed above many of the

little sepulchres. I was silently contemplating the inscription over the grave of a young lady, which was surmounted by that expressive figure, when the *valet-de-place*, impatient at my staying so long, informed me that the tomb contained nothing remarkable, and was the resting place of a naval officer, whose professional anchor had only been transferred from his button to his bier. My melancholy musings were soon put to flight by this absurd sally, but the rascal gained his point, for we rushed out of the cemetery, much more in a laughing, than a lacrymose humour.

The worst of sight-seeing at St. Petersburg is, that it is impossible to dispense with the constant attendance of an ignorant *valet-de-place*,—a fraternity for whom I have little love. The man

who took us under his care was a perfect specimen of his calling; he talked a great deal and knew very little, gave us his orders with the most consummate coolness, and on my expressing my surprise at his inability to read Russian, he informed me that it was no wonder, as he had been bred, and born, in Tooley Street, and candidly confessed himself an Englishman, and a cockney.

The Probeojenski Church is not only filled with military ornaments, but is surrounded with a railing, made of Turkish cannon, placed upright in the ground, and connected with chains which forms a very handsome, and characteristic enclosure to the sacred arsenal. I will not proceed with any further description of churches, as in St. Petersburg they resemble one another

so much, that I should fear a more lengthened account might weary my readers as much as visiting them tired me.

Prince E. D—, to whom we had brought letters, called on us, on the second morning after our arrival, and welcomed us to his country in the warmest and most hospitable manner. He begged that we would make every use of his name, in obtaining any permission we should desire in the way of sight-seeing, and took his leave after having promised to take us to a ball, on the next evening, and to introduce us into Russian society. We found on further acquaintance, that this kind and excellent man quite acted up to all the promises he made at our first interview; and during the whole time we remained at St. Petersburg, his house was always open to

us. This assistance towards our seeing every thing was invaluable; and his interest in our instruction and amusement never for a moment seemed to weary. Never shall I forget his continued hospitality and kindness, or the amiable, and unaffected good nature of the Princess, his wife. Should these few lines ever meet their eyes, I hope that they will forgive my thus mentioning actions, which were never meant to be made public, and accept this slight tribute to hospitality and kindness, from a grateful stranger, who coming to a strange land, unknown, and uncared for, found in them friends whose kindness will always form the pleasantest recollection of his stay at St. Petersburg.

When the good Prince had left us, we drove to the passport office, where all per-

sons coming to St. Petersburg are obliged to show themselves shortly after their arrival. The officers asked us a few more questions, were very civil, and told us we might now go, and recover our books, that had been taken from us, in the steamer, for inspection. I must say that we always found Russian officers of police, and customs, exceedingly polite, and sometimes even obliging, but invariably excessively inquisitive; we found that the best way to ingratiate ourselves with them was, to tell them as much of our plans and projects as we thought necessary; confidence generally pleased them, and in return they gave us much useful information.

I certainly have not the least objection to tell any body what my intentions as to moving from place to place, may be, and I

cannot agree with other travellers who have declared it to be an excessively disagreeable and humiliating thing, to tell a man in uniform, that you hope soon to go to Moscow, and expect, in all probability to return to St. Petersburg in a short time, provided you do not go any where else. Persons who complain of such trifles, must I think be hard up for grievances, and would be an invaluable addition to Conciliation Hall, or any other assembly or society, where fancied wrongs are distorted into bugbears of real oppression.

The inspection of our books at the Censor office was a mere form, as the seals of the parcel were broken before our eyes and the books returned to us untouched; but in the case of imported works, and newspapers for general circulation, they are very particular.

Numbers of books, and journals, are absolutely prohibited, and are, either sent back or destroyed, and Punch would laugh till his dear old hump shook again, to see the mutilation his jokes sometimes experience at the hands of the Russian police. I saw some copies with whole paragraphs fairly cut out, while other obnoxious facetiæ were partially erased, or scratched out, in order not to injure the picture, on the other side of the leaf; notwithstanding all these precautions, I believe it is possible to get almost any book at St. Petersburg, but this is attended with some trouble.

Their laws seemed strange to us, natives of a country where the press is so perfectly free, and where an editor has little to fear beyond a mere action for libel, the litigation of which is attended with tediousness

and delay: but there exists in England a mighty power, that is often carried to a great extreme, and is not always exercised with justice or judgment. Periodical writers are frequently careless of previous inquiry into charges which they bring against persons, in so severe and public a manner. A trial or positive proof in contradiction, may successfully vindicate and clear the character of the persons attacked; but a stain often remains behind, to the great prejudice of the victim, as the world is always readier to believe bad than good; and although the charge may be perfectly removed, the community will persist in believing that there might have been some foundation for the allegation.

A slight aspersion is often sufficient to damage the character of an individual for

life; and many a man has sorrowed for years over an idle report that originated in a newspaper, and has undeservedly lost for ever that unsullied purity of character, which an honest heart prizes beyond its life.*

I should be very sorry to see the rights of the press invaded, or that great bulwark of British liberty in any way weakened; at the same time, I should like to see editors more mild in their attacks, and less partial in their praise. Crime, injustice, and wrong, should be publicly condemned in

* By more careful investigation of every serious charge about to be brought forward, in a public print, this evil would be reduced, actions for libel would become more and more rare, and the influence of the press, considerably increased, as the public would then feel a faith and reliance, in newspaper intelligence, that is at present unknown.

the strongest terms; but it should be done, more with the view of preventing others from falling into like errors, than of branding with eternal infamy or disgrace, the names and families of the alleged evil doers.

But I am running off to matters that have nothing at all to do with my subject, as the economy of newspapers is the question least of all canvassed in Russia, for the Black Eagle is the avowed editor of the little political literature that exists in that country.

CHAPTER V.

Fête at the Countess O—'s—Horrible Roads—Russian travelling Carriages—Russian Ladies—Their unpronounceable Names—French as a general Language—Desire of the Russian nobility to Travel—Toilette of the Russian Ladies — A Southern Beauty—Russian Officers—Gaiety of St. Petersburg—Society —The Ladies unequalled in light Conversation——Our Presentation to the Grand Duke Michael—His kindness—The Michael Palace—Royal Privacy not sought in Russia.

CHAPTER V.

THE BALL.

On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet—

BYRON.

On the evening appointed we went with Prince D— to a fête at the Countess O—'s where we made our first entry into Russian society. The *campagne* of Count O— is not in the Islands, but about eight miles from town. E— went on with the Prince, and I intended to follow as well as I could,

in our own carriage; however, at the first turn, my coachman cleverly took the only wrong way, and drove off through the Islands some distance into the country. I had heard that the roads in Russia were not good; but on this, my first essay as a wayfarer, I could hardly believe that the series of holes over which I was jolting, were anything but a badly tilled potatoe-field.

Within the actual suburbs of the town are to be found roads, compared with which the wildest Irish boreen, is wooden pavement. They are much frequented tracks untouched by spade or shovel, and the only discernible traces of human labour are, the long round spars, laid down on two cross sticks, which are supposed to serve as bridges over the little drains that continually intersect the track. The ruts on these original high-ways are not of the same family as

their spring-breaking relations in England; they are found in every variety, from the ravine with gradually sloping sides, into whose depths the carriage descends quietly, with the reverse of the motion experienced in passing a small arched bridge, to the deep and rugged chasm, into which the wheels go "flop," and which occasionally in extreme cases, brings the vehicle to a stand still. This is a calamity that interferes not in the least with the self-possession of the bearded driver, as he sits quietly on his box, and flogs the horses, till they drag the carriage out again.

In places where there is not much traffic, these roads are just passable during the summer, and better to travel on, than bad pavement; but how any animal on earth can draw a carriage through them, in wet weather, or during the breaking up of the

frosts, I cannot imagine. Even in this time of year, though they were quite hard, our active little horses found it as much as they could do to pull us out of a real Russian rut.

Travelling carriages are made very strong to suit such trials, and are generally fitted up with every convenience for long journeys, as they often have to play the part of carriage, bed, and house. The Russians seldom stop on their journeys, as the distances are so great, and the inns so bad; but their travelling carriages are very comfortable, and on the only two macadamized roads in the empire, from St. Petersburg to Moscow and to Riga, travellers can get over the ground faster and more conveniently, than in any other country.

After having wandered over these wild roads for some time, I, with great difficulty,

made the coachman understand where I wanted to go. We then struck across the country, and arrived at the desired place much to my satisfaction, as I was quite tired of bounding over these extraordinary routes uncertain whether I was going in the direction of Viborg or Novogorod.

I soon found myself in a very pretty room, full of people, who were dancing the same quadrilles, and valses, with the same untiring determination, that I had left ten days before in London. I was of course presented to our hostess, who is very pretty, very graceful, and *spirituelle*, and who soon made me known to half the people in the room.

Many of the ladies were exceedingly pretty, all dressed in excellent taste, and very agreeable, but their names are the devil! In ten minutes I was fairly bewildered, and my

tongue vainly endeavoured to repeat a fraction of awful words, of six or eight syllables ending in, offski, ouski, itzki, insky, and off. I never was so puzzled—as fast as a sound somewhat resembling a Russian surname trembled on my tongue, another totally unpronounceable one startled my frightened ear, and I soon found that time alone would make me familiar with such uncommonly hard words. For the first week I was in Russia, I never dared to call any of my new friends by their names, and used to describe them as tall, or short, dark or fair, with any other particulars that presented themselves to my mind at the moment—a mode of conveying my ideas, which sometimes got me into great scrapes, as the descriptions, I am ashamed to say, were not always quite correct, and a sister or cousin might not

enjoy hearing her best friend alluded to, as short or fair, when she happened to be tall and dark.

I am sure that, if Juliet had paid a visit to Russia, she would have found out, "What's in a name," for I found more in their names, than was ever dreamt of in my philosophy; and no tongue, however nimble, could possibly pronounce or remember such a curious concatenation of vowels and consonants at the first attempt. However, notwithstanding, I passed a charming evening, and was greatly amused.

Society of the higher class differs little in outward appearance, in European countries, and it is not until the stranger begins to know well the individuals who compose it, that national differences and feelings are discovered; thus, at the ball to-night, we

danced, and talked in the same manner, and on the same subjects (except that the everlasting Polka was not so much in vogue) in Finland, as in May Fair; all were graceful, and good-natured in manner, and French flowed as softly from every one's lips, as if we had been in a salon of the Fauxbourg St. Germain. This seems to be completely the adopted tongue of the educated Russians. They write, speak, and I am sure, think in French: it is the language of their infancy, and I do not remember to have heard a lady converse in her own tongue, during the whole time I was in Russia.

This may be very unnational, but it is very convenient; as French is now generally spoken, and is by every one admitted to be an excellent language for the purposes of common conversation, and for the conven-

tional usages of life, it is a great pity that we, as a nation, do not speak it better, and that the youth of Great Britain are not taught it, as an indispensable part of education; but I should be sorry to see it usurp the place of our national language in the way it does in Russia, for on expressing my astonishment to a lady, that in society I never heard a syllable of the soft and beautiful Sclave, she confessed with the greatest candour, that they spoke it so badly, it became as difficult to some as a foreign language.

The men of course all understand their native tongue, and speak it constantly among themselves; but the ladies cling to French with the greatest constancy, and it is essentially the language of their thoughts. I fear affection for their country is not the most prominent virtue of the ladies of the north.

The climate may be a great cause of this; and who can wonder, that after having spent a succession of winters, in their ice-bound town, they should sigh for the mild climate of the south, and should naturally desire to exchange, for a time, grey mist for sparkling sunshine, and snow clad firs for the olive and the vine. But, as the greater number whose tastes and inclinations lead them to pant for more genial climes, are blessed with husbands employed in the service of the state, their wishes are not as often gratified as might be expected, and they are obliged to content themselves with stoves and furs, in place of arbours and orange-groves.

In their often expressed anxiety to go abroad, I never heard a regret for the country they so ardently seemed to desire to leave, and they talk of a winter at Paris as a sort

of delicious era in their lives, and a sojourn at Rome or Naples as a foretaste of paradise.

Those who are not in service, consequently, travel as much as possible; and I never heard of any restrictions being placed on the wishes of private individuals, in this respect, with the exception of young men, who are not allowed to leave the country before they attain the age of twenty-five, unless their state of health absolutely requires a visit to a warmer climate.

Our ball was kept up with great spirit; the Polka seems for a wonder to be rather at a discount in St. Petersburg, which speaks much for the discretion of the gay part of the community; but the Mazourka, danced after the manner of a London or Parisian cotillon, seems here to replace all the fury of Polka-mania. The room looked very gay, as more

than half the men were in uniform, and their brilliant dresses contrasted beautifully with the varied costumes of the fair revellers.

The ladies in Russia understand perfectly the secrets of the toilette, and every Englishman must pay homage to their exquisite and unrivalled taste in dress. These summer fêtes are excellent opportunities for exhibiting their knowledge of the mystic art, for they come in morning or evening costume, a light bonnet, or wreath of flowers, as suits their fancy, or best adds to their beauty. I never saw them in what may be termed *grande tenue;* but a toilette suited to a party, partaking as much of the character of an informal *fête champêtre,* as of a regular ball, requires perhaps more study, than the more magnificent, but more

common, *costume de bal.* A treble row of magnificent pearls frequently graced the necks of these northern beauties, but I never saw a lady, at these small summer parties, wear many jewels, and they never commit the solecism in dress, so common in England, of appearing at a country ball in a blaze of jewels.

The continued confinement in hot rooms, during the long winter, and exposure to the oppressive heat of the stoves do not improve their complexions; nevertheless we saw many pretty women at St. Petersburg, and their correct taste in costume adds much to their beauty.

I met one or two Circassians, children of the sunny south, whose dark loveliness contrasted well with the fairer charms of the daughters of the Sclavonian race. The

large lustrous eye, beaming from a long eyelash, and the deep olive complexion, at once declared her oriental origin, while her raven tresses hung in heavy braids round her oval and classic features, and twined in graceful profusion over her well formed head. Beautiful hair has a most destructive effect on my peace of mind, and when added to other charms is perfectly irresistible; and I never see a woman, armed with such a panoply of loveliness, without feeling somewhat as Pope must have done, when he wrote the Rape of the Lock.

> Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
> And mighty hearts are held in slender chains;
> With hairy springes we the birds betray,
> Light lines of hair surprise the finny prey.
> Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
> And beauty draws us with a single hair.

Our host exerted himself beyond any thing to promote the enjoyment of his guests, and seemed to take quite as active a part in doing the honours, as the fair lady of the mansion. Supper was served on a number of little round tables, where seats were provided for every one, which renders this a most agreeable meal, with all the sociability and without the formality and importance of dinner: in Russia every one dines early, so that supper—a necessary finale to the fatigues of the day is served nearly in the same manner, and is devoured with as good an appetite as the meal that we reckon so important a part of the business of the day.

We sat by some young Russian officers, whom we found very gay, good-humoured fellows, and peculiarly kind to us, as strangers. They do not wait for the stupid

form of an introduction to enter into conversation with a foreigner, but chatted away very merrily about their own country and ours, and laughed good-naturedly at our awkward attempts at pronouncing their names. They were for the most part, sunburnt, good looking fellows, with a great deal of soldier-like frankness and fun about them. Some of these had seen much active service, and had fought in Poland and the Caucasus; they told us many stories of their campaigns in the most amusing manner, and were altogether more like English officers than any men I have ever seen on the continent.

We danced again after supper, and drove home at two o'clock in the morning, by the blue twilight, over the rough road; and felt very grateful to the never ending

day, for shewing us the chasms we were passing, as a drive across such a country on a dark night, would not be, I think, exactly agreeable, to the uninitiated. We were delighted with our *début* in Russian society, for we had experienced much hospitality, and kindness. We therefore came home in high spirits, which I have always found to be the case, when one has met with a little considerate good nature in any assembly whatever.

The Russians are immoderately fond of society, and I should think that in no capital in Europe, so continual a round of gaiety is kept up during the whole year. In winter scarcely an evening passes without a ball, and in most of the great houses, the lady mistress receives on one night in the week; they generally dine

at five o'clock, but with this exception the hours are not much earlier than in London, and dancing is here worshipped with just as much ardour. In summer most of the ladies leave their palaces in St. Petersburg, and continue in their villas on the islands of the Neva, the same pursuits on a smaller scale; so that during the greater part of the year they are occupied in the same round of visits, receptions, and balls, only diversified perhaps in summer, by a boating party, or a pic-nic. Such a life must seem sometimes tedious, and I fancied that I occasionally perceived a langour in many—the inevitable consequence of the continued pursuit of the same enjoyments.

The greater number of the men are in the army, and as his Majesty makes the

most of the short summer for his dearly loved manœuvres and reviews, few are constantly in town; but the camp being generally within reach of many, these belonging to the corps of the guard, go backwards and forwards, and lead "as *hard* a life" as the officers of a regiment quartered at Hounslow. My readers may imagine that a life of this kind does not of itself create a love for the higher branches of literature or lead them to indulge much, in what we should call rational conversation; but though the Russian ladies seldom speak of politics and are never blue, they are unequalled in light talk, and their powers of repartee are most amusing. I could sincerely pity any unwary stranger who should unwittingly enter the lists of light wit, with such practised and skilful antagonists, as are

some I had the pleasure of meeting with in Russia.

There is nothing more charming than the light and sprightly raillery of a pretty woman. The laughing question so puzzling to the intended answerer, that before he can concoct a suitable response he finds the question fully settled from the lady's own lips, and his merry antagonist rattling away a volley of light sarcasms and laughing inuendoes the merriment of which excuses each wound that the unpitied victim may be obliged to bear; for before the poor creature has time to think how he can best defend himself, the skirmish is over, and the victorious lady walks off, amid the acclamations of her hearers, in search of fresh conquests. There is much of this play of words among the merry wives of St.

Petersburg, and their beautiful French, *par excellence*, the language of comedy, gives them great power in this style of conversation.

By far the greater number of those who indulge most in gaiety are married, but family cares do not seem to prevent them from enjoying any of the pleasures of society. Living as they do continually in so social a manner, it is no wonder that they are so proficient in all the arts which render most agreeable the conversazione, or the ball, and to the Russian ladies, I gladly render all homage, as being animated and gay, kind, and considerate towards the stranger, adding to their many personal charm the varied graces of highly polished manners, combined with the greatest animation, and never failing good spirits.

From this time, as long as we staid at St. Petersburg we had the honour of being invited to most of the receptions, balls, &c. that took place in the islands, and seldom an evening passed that we did not find ourselves enjoying Russian hospitality to the fullest degree. We were particularly fortunate in finding in our own Secretary of Embassy (Mr. Bloomfield, our Minister being absent) one who spared no pains to make our stay as agreeable as possible, and at whose hospitable board we often met many of the *corps diplomatique*, who muster in great numbers at St. Petersburg, and who form, as is usually the case, a most agreeable society. I am not going to write a detail of the many favours we received at his hands, for such a course could be neither pleasing to him, nor would

in any wise repay one of the numerous obligations we owe to him; but I may fairly say, that all that a good heart and a kind disposition could do, was done by him, in the most unaffected manner, and that his friendship, beyond any thing else, rendered our stay at St. Petersburg one of unalloyed pleasure.

Our mornings were generally spent in sight-seeing, and our evenings in a drive in the islands, the French play—or a party. The novelty of all that we saw, and the kindness of our friends, which enabled us to see every thing in the best manner, rendered our three weeks at St. Petersburg absolutely delightful.

Soon after our arrival we had the honour of being presented to His Imperial High-

ness the Grand Duke Michael, whose unvaried consideration for, and kindness to English travellers are quite proverbial. He received us with the greatest condescension, and did us the honour of showing us his magnificent collection of arms and military curiosities of various kinds, which he has amassed with great care and success. Among them is a letter from Napoleon to Kutusoff, written during the retreat, and couched in the most civil language. He prays for peace, and seems to expect it on advantageous terms. His Imperial Highness took us over his garden, and stables, and exhibited every thing in the kindest manner. Such unaffected good-nature surprised us, being so totally unexpected on our part; and as we stood on the steps of the noble palace

which bears his name, I wondered at the good fortune of the wanderers, in thus experiencing, from the hands of so exalted a personage, the kindness of a friend, and at hearing from *his* lips, many an interesting story of Russia and her children. We staid a long time with this kind and excellent Prince in his own palace, and after having shewn us all his treasures, and every thing that could interest a stranger, he dismissed us with many kind words, assuring us at the same time of a continuance of his regard, a promise that he faithfully kept whenever we had the honour of meeting him afterwards.

The Michael Palace is one of the handsomest in St. Petersburg: the front forms one side of a square, while the back looks

over its spacious gardens to the Champ de Mars. The greater part of the lower rooms is devoted to the Arsenal, and to his Imperial Highness's private apartments; a handsome staircase leads to the magnificent reception rooms up stairs. The garden is very pretty, and very extensive for a city park. It contains many good trees, which are rare objects in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg, and lying as it does, between this beautiful palace, and the immense Champ de Mars, it forms a great addition to the beauty of the town, and a delightful promenade for its Imperial owners. Altogether the palace of the Grand Duke Michael is the most agreeable residence of all the imperial palaces which abound in St. Petersburg;

and like every thing else of the kind in Russia, the garden with its grass lawn and stately trees, is not hid by a high wall which would disfigure that part of the town, but is surrounded, by an iron railing, which gives the city the full benefit of the beauty of both the gardens and palace. Royal privacy is not so much sought for here, as in England. The people, in all foreign countries, I think, behave much better towards their princes than they do with us; and a royal personage may walk about in most of the capitals of the continent, without being followed like a wild beast, or run after by all the population of the town. I doubt whether Queen Pomare would attract a greater crowd than Queen Victoria, were it publicly known that those

illustrious personages would drive or walk down Piccadilly on a different day, and the great desire of the people of England to see their Sovereign, whenever she appears in public, arises I fear more from a mere feeling of curiosity than of respect or regard.

CHAPTER VI.

St. Petersburg the City of Palaces—The Troitza Bridge —Magnificent view of the City—The Hermitage—The Houghton Gallery — Expense lavished upon Russian imperial Residences—Want of a Middle Class in Russia—The Winter Palace—M. de Custine's story of the rebuilding of this Palace, a calumny—Devotion of the people when the Building was in flames—Humanity of the Czar—The Emperor's private Telegraph—Column of the Emperor Alexander—The Taurida Palace—Extraordinary Ball-Room and Conservatory—Beautiful Prestol—Arsenal of St. Petersburg—Arms and Uniforms—The Modern Arsenal.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PALACE.

Thence in the midst
Divided by a river, of whose banks
On each side, an imperial city stood
With towers and temples proudly elevate.

MILTON.

ST. PETERSBURG certainly well deserves her high sounding name of "the City of Palaces," for no capital in Europe can boast of so magnificent an assemblage of royal residences. They are all handsome, though not one is built of solid stone; with the exception of the Marble Palace, they are all of brick,

covered with plaster:—the Hermitage of a white colour, and the far famed Winter Palace brown. These form one line on the quay from the Place of the Admiralty, to the corner of the Champ de Mars.

The Winter Palace and the Hermitage are connected together, though of very different styles of architecture, and form a most gorgeous façade; their beauty being greatly increased by the noble river which rolls by the granite quays in front.

The Troitza bridge crosses the river immediately above this quay of palaces. This bridge, as well as the other two, is merely a number of planks laid on low barges, which are removed altogether during the breaking up of the frosts, when the river becomes totally impassable for some days; on these occasions the merchants unable to pass,

from the left banks, to the Exchange, are obliged to meet elsewhere for the transaction of business.

From the centre of this bridge the finest view of the town is obtained; on the left hand is the wide expanse of the Champ de Mars, with the statue of Suwarroff at the entrance, then on the granite quays, stand the Marble, the Hermitage, and Winter Palaces, and further on, the spire of the Admiralty, and the cupola of the Isaak Church, tower like giants above all the other buildings. On the right is the fortress, with the tall tower of its church, and exactly opposite, on an island, stands the Exchange, and surrounding buildings; in the midst flows the noble river, which divides below the bridge, into two equally broad streams, whose great width forms a sheet of blue water like a lake; while

far away in the distance, below the Isaak bridge are indistinctly seen on either hand, many fine public and private edifices, and the long line of handsome buildings, called the English Quay. Often by the bright sunshine of day, or the more suitable grey twilight of a Russian night have we stopped to gaze on this vast panorama of beauty, and each time found it more striking, as in so wide an expanse of river, and architectural scenery, familiarity with the separate objects is necessary, in order fully to appreciate the magnificence of the whole.

The Marble Palace is completely dismantled in its interior; but the Hermitage, the favourite residence of the great Catherine, contains an excellent collection of pictures, among which, those of Rembrandt, of Wouvermans, and some very fine Murillos may

be said to be the best. A suite of more than twenty-five apartments, are devoted to these works of art, which are very well arranged, and there is an excellent French catalogue in each of the rooms. This gallery the only public one in Russia, was begun by Catherine; many of the best pictures came from England, and belonged to the Houghton collection; additions have been made by the succeeding Emperors, and it is now an excellent, though I should hardly think a first rate collection. Two rooms at the end of the gallery are filled with a most extraordinary quantity of jewels, cameos, intaglios, snuff boxes, cases of gold and silver, ivory carvings, and articles of virtu without number.

A profusion of treasures of rare material and costly workmanship, presents of every

thing most valuable, from all the great potentates of the earth, are heaped up in absolute masses, and it seemed to me that earth and sea, had sent a combination of their richest treasures to form a monument to the greatness of the Czars. I was so completely bewildered by the variety of small objects of such immense value, that I cannot attempt a detailed description of this extraordinary collection, and I now almost imagine that I must have been wandering by the light of Aladdin's lamp, in some magic cave, where all the fairy riches of the Arabian Nights were brought together in one mass, for the purpose of bewildering an unlucky pauper. However no black slaves appeared with baskets on their heads to carry off a small provision of diamond or emerald fruits, for the use of either myself, or respected mother,

and the Genius of the Ring was personated by an Imperial footman who answered to our "knock and ring," by letting us out at the expense of a rouble. These collections are on the first floor, whose large windows command a beautiful view of the river; in the court formed by the interior of the building, a garden is raised to the level of these rooms, and has a curious effect, for from one window the Neva is seen flowing a depth of about thirty feet below, while at the other side flowers are blooming, and a fountain playing in what appears to be the court yard of the palace.

In the Russian Imperial residences of the past and present day expense has been, and is, lavished in every manner that taste and magnificence can conceive; to produce a novel effect, much real beauty is often sacrificed,

for while a hanging garden on one side astonishes the stranger he may be equally surprised at finding no staircase in any way proportionate to the beauty and size of the apartments, and a winding or narrow flight of steps, sometimes conducts to chambers that almost realize the romantic stories of oriental splendour.

This incongruity may be said to extend to most things moral and physical in Russia, for in no country (except perhaps in Ireland,) is the transition from the palace to the cabin more abrupt, or the difference between the peer and peasant more wide. This is mainly to be attributed to the want of a middle class, that cement of the social state, those cramping irons of the constitutional edifice, the existence of which is so absolutely indispensable to the well-being of a commonwealth. The serf in his sheepskin may walk in the

palace of his lord, or may watch by his master's gate, but no feeling in his breast tells him that he is born of the same race, or formed for the same purposes; and the great lord, knowing his superiority of birth, education, and descent, looks forth on his horde of slaves, with all benignity, and kind attention; but it is the affection of a good heart, for a noble and faithful beast, whose involuntary service may sometimes command the solicitude of the master, but never the least participation in a single right of fellowship or friendship: but more of this hereafter.

From the Hermitage we walked through the Winter Palace—that far famed pile of grandeur, the stories of whose glory have reached the ends of the earth. We wandered through suites of gorgeous chambers,

galleries, and halls, filled with marbles, malachite, precious stones and vases, and pictures of many of the great generals and mighty men of Russia. The Empress's drawing room is a perfect jewel of taste, and the Chapel, St. George's Hall, and numbers of gilded chambers, one more gorgeous than another, are an almost wearying succession of magnificence. This vast pile is said to contain five thousand people when the court is at St. Petersburg, and is a fitting residence for the retinue of him who rules absolutely over a seventh of the habitable globe. It was in a great part destroyed by fire in 1836. The fire originated in the flues used for heating the building, and burned for some days. The destruction of property was immense; but in two years it was restored to its former magnificence, and is now

perhaps the finest royal residence in the world.

And here I cannot help alluding to M. de Custine's story of the rebuilding of this palace. He declares, that in order that the great structure should be made habitable as soon as possible, six thousand workmen were daily employed in the interior, which was heated to the height of thirty degrees Reaumur, that the plastering of the rooms might be quickly dried. The consequence, according to that veracious author was, that the unfortunate labourers died in great numbers from the baneful effects of the over-heated atmosphere wherein they worked, and subsequent exposure to the intense cold of a Russian winter. But M. de Custine does not remember, that every one of these men, like all the other labourers of St. Petersburg,

worked of his own free-will, and that any of them might have quitted this fatal employment at a short notice.

M. de Custine probably never heard of a Russian bath, in which the people delight, and that they think it a great pleasure to go reeking from the vapour as hot as can be borne, to plunge into cold water, or even roll in the snow; and he does not perhaps know, that many a freeborn Englishman works constantly in the close galleries of deep mines, where the air is loaded with noxious vapour, and where the height of temperature is sometimes known to equal that of the chambers which he has made out to have been the tomb of so many thousand serfs.

But my readers must allow me to tell one trait of the man, whom M. de Custine has held up, as the decimator of his subjects and

for the gratification of whose vanity so fearful a crime was said to have been perpetrated. The progress of the flames during the great fire of the Winter Palace was extremely slow, owing to the successful exclusion of outward air, insomuch that the servants and firemen had time to save much of the valuable furniture, and costly ornaments, contained in the burning rooms. The heroic devotion, and disregard of danger exhibited by these men, are spoken of in glowing terms, by all who were witnesses of the devastation of that fatal night; and it was with great difficulty, that these brave servants could be prevented from recklessly endangering their lives in their attempts to save the property of their master. Some lives were lost, whereupon his Majesty issued strict orders, that the people should be absolutely prevented from entering the

burning pile, and he is reported to have said "Let it burn away, let it all go,— but let not a life be endangered in attempts to save the comparatively worthless property!" I have heard that he ordered some officers actually to smash with hammers the large mirrors, in order to prevent the soldiers and people from making any attempts to save them! Is it likely then that the same Prince could have in cold blood ordained, that the same people, whose safety in the confusion of the conflagration he cared for, and assured, should be sacrificed by thousands to gratify a vain desire? The Winter Palace was certainly restored in an incredibly short time, but I altogether doubt that it was done at any extraordinary sacrifice of life.

The above story was related to me by two or three different people, Russians and

foreigners, and is so well known at St. Petersburg, that I should think any inquiring stranger must have heard it, and the author of "Russia in 39," must have published his story of the terrible restoration of the palace, with the full knowledge of the facts of the conflagration, which however he has taken care to keep to himself.

There is a telegraph in the corner of the Winter Palace, close to the Emperor's private apartments; by means of which he himself transmits his orders, to Cronstadt, Peterhof, &c.

It is on a different principle from ours, being merely two hands, on a white dial like that of a clock, and it works at night by means of lamps, fastened to the extremities of the hands, which gives it a great superiority over the French and English plan.

The column of the Emperor Alexander stands in the great place, formed by the south façade of the Winter Palace, and the buildings of the Etat-Major. The shaft is one magnificent block of red granite, surmounted by an angel in bronze, bearing in one hand or rather supporting against his shoulder a cross, and pointing to Heaven with uplifted arm. The column is one of the best and most graceful monuments in the city; it was erected about ten years ago to the memory of "The Amiable Alexander," and bears the simple inscription, "To Alexander the First—Grateful Russia." A soldier of the late Emperor's favourite regiment mounts guard at the foot of the noble monument, raised to the memory of his master, and they still wear the uniform of the period of the Emperor's death.

It was designed by M. Monferrand, the

present architect of the Izaak Church; though the whole is chaste and grand, I cannot exactly see why the Angel is emblematical of the deeds of the late Emperor; and a stranger ignorant as to whose memory it had been erected, would suppose it rather to be a monument raised to the virtues and sufferings of a martyr, than to the glories of an absolute and victorious prince.

The Taurida Palace, built for Potemkin by Catherine the Second, is a long, low, ugly building, of no architectural pretensions, situated at some distance from the Hermitage, and facing the river. Its chief curiosity is the immense ball-room, and winter garden; this enormous hall, 320 feet long by about 70 broad, contains some good copies in marble, of many of the im-

mortal statues of the Palazzo Vecchio, and the Vatican.

One side of this spacious room opens on an immense conservatory wherein are gravel walks of considerable extent, and orange trees of great size. The fêtes given by the child of fortune, in such a room, must have realized many a tale of enchantment, and the revels of the favourite of the great Empress, far exceeded in magnificence any entertainments of modern days. Thousands of wax candles illuminated the fairy scene; and while, without, a Russian winter bound in frosty fetters every generating principle of nature, within, a profusion of tropical plants and flowers were blooming in all the fragrance of a southern evening, and the weary revellers reposed under the spreading branches of the orange and the vine.

That luxurious conservatory must have been a wonderful place for such conversations as have been common to ball rooms in every age;

> "For there the courtier,
> He might transport her"

to laurel groves and shady bowers without incurring the risk of cold and rheumatism: and I am doubtful if, even in the fabled Groves of Blarney, the ardent lover would find the luxurious wonders of the place more favourable to his soft suit, than in the winter garden of this Paradise of Potemkin. But decay is now visible in every part of the building, and the stability of the palace, seems scarcely greater, than was the endurance of the smiles of the Imperial giver.

In the great circular hall, there is at

present a most beautiful Prestol or standing place of the Emperor, presented to His Majesty by Demidoff, which will eventually be placed in the Church of St. Izaak; it is a small temple whose dome is supported by pillars of malachite, and the pavement is composed of rare and precious marbles; it is a beautiful piece of Russian workmanship, valued at some immense sum, and will form a part of the riches that will one day be collected within the walls of the metropolitan Church.

The Arsenal of St. Petersburg contains an excellent collection of ancient arms, and specimens of almost every instrument that the ingenuity of man has from time to time invented for the destruction of his species, either by wholesale, or in detail. Infernal machines of most elaborate construction, can-

non of leather, wood, and iron, short guns, long guns, and every sort of diabolical implement, of ancient and modern warfare, are here arranged in endless variety. Although the Russian labels on each gave us very little intelligence of their particular histories, we were greatly edified by the display of such a mass of killing tools.

There are a number of enormous banners that belonged to the Strelitzes, those Janissaries of Russia, whose heads Peter the Great amused himself with cutting off, while drinking his wine after dinner:—a bloody dessert, which he insisted on the foreign ambassadors partaking of at the same time. Here is also a chair set round with pistols, which belonged to a great robber of the Caspian, who used to kill the subjects of the great Peter, for a length of time

with impunity, and whose walking stick would have made a handy cane for Goliath of Gath. He slaughtered a whole ship's crew that came to take him, but "was bowled out at last" and his stool, and staff, accompanied his head to St. Petersburg.

Here numbers of suits of uniform that belonged to dead Emperors, and mighty men, are preserved with the greatest care; also the three cornered hat, with a bullet hole in the crown, worn by Charles XII, "On Pultava's fatal day." Had the said hole been a little lower, the steed of the royal Swede that night by himself might

> "Have grazed at ease,
> "Beyond the swift Borysthenes,"

or any where else he chose, and possibly we might never have heard in verse of the Hetman Mazeppa.

The funeral car which brought the remains of the Emperor Alexander from the south of Russia, is also kept here, together with a number of models of various fortresses taken from the Turks and Persians, and also some curious figures representing the armed warriors of the wild tribes of the Caspian on horseback. Altogether the collection is perfect in its way; it contains a number of objects of great historical interest, and we found it better worth seeing than almost any thing we visited in St. Petersburg.

The modern Arsenal, at the other side of the street is completely uninteresting, and the soldiers who shewed us the ancient collection, seemed greatly surprised that we would not wait a few minutes to see a steam-engine of twenty-horse power,

for boring guns, put in motion, which is reckoned a great wonder in this place. However, we told them that we had already seen a great many much larger ones in different countries. This fact they seemed very much inclined to doubt; and after shaking their heads very wisely, they bade us good morning, evidently considering us either very learned and travelled young gentlemen, or else horrid impostors—to the latter opinion, I rather suspect they, after mature consideration, inclined.

CHAPTER VII.

Pavement of St. Petersburg — Horrible jolting — A drive on a Droschky—Russian Horses—Hackney Droschkies—Sufferings of the coachmen in Winter—Climate of Russia—Monotony of the cold Season—Disadvantages of St. Petersburg as a commercial City—Anomalies in the commercial system of Russia—English Merchants in St. Petersburg—Visit to the Camp of Crasnoe Seloe—A rainy Review—Presentation to the Emperor—Mounted Circassians—Unpopularity of the War in the Caucasus—Bravery of the Circassians—Military Manœuvres—Russian troops.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CAMP.

Multos castra juvant, et lituo tubæ
Permistus sonitus, bellaque matribus
Detestata—

HORACE.

ONE great draw-back to our sight-seeing pleasures in St. Petersburg was the enormous distances we continually had to go from place to place; and strangers like us, whose stay is limited, and who naturally desire to see every thing, are obliged to spend the greater part of the day in their carriages. I must confess, that I like walking about a new town and

exploring alone on foot many things that would otherwise escape notice; but this is impossible here, for if a visit has to be paid in the islands which are three miles from the Galernoy, or English Quay, and a palace, church, or other object is to be examined, the day is almost gone before much is done.

We therefore invariably found ourselves soon after breakfast in a calèche, (a machine, like a cabriolet on four wheels with two horses, and a seat before for the driver,) bounding over the uneven pavement of St. Petersburg under the exclusive guidance of our valet de place, who always made us do just as he liked.

There is no country in the world that has been so little visited as Russia, with the spirit of Napoleon, MacAdam, Parnell, or other great road makers; for the pavement

in the streets of the towns is quite in proportion to the atrocity of the highways in the country. They have a method of putting all the biggest stones in lines across the streets; these lines intersect one another, and so form squares, whose interiors are filled with an olla podrida of paving stones, big and little, from a small pebble to a small rock. The whole is laid on a thin strata of gravel, and not hammered together with any care, so that in a short time the smaller stones disappear, and disjointed boulders are left sticking up in every direction. They are evidently obliged to repair this vile pavement constantly, for in almost every street, we saw workmen employed in laying down this bone-shaking invention, and the only time when it is possible to drive over it with comfort is when

it is just finished, and the inequalities are covered with a thick coat of gravel.

They say that they are now greatly improved in this branch of municipal economy; but I hear that twenty years ago, the shocks experienced in driving through the streets of St. Petersburg were so terrific, that the coachmen were generally strapped to their boxes. I hardly know whether I ought to put this story in print, as I told it last night to some young ladies, who all seemed dreadfully incredulous, declaring that the age of travellers' wonders had not yet passed, and that Gulliver, had been written in vain:—so pray behave better, kind reader, and believe all I tell you, for I should be very unhappy, if I thought that you could so far distrust your author, as to think for a

moment, that such vehicles must have belonged to the establishment of the great Baron Munchausen, or that I have a personal spite against the paving board of St. Petersburg.

If you ever go to Russia, try a gallop over the stones, and your aching bones will soon attest the probability of my story. So joking apart, I tell you that I heard it gravely asserted that the coachmen of St. Petersburg were, in old times, always lashed to the driving seat; and really there are still some streets in the suburbs of the town through which no coachman, even one gifted with a centre of gravity of London proportions, could drive fast without being hurled from his bad eminence.

But the way really to enjoy the ups and downs of life in St. Petersburg, is to take a drive in a droschky; this is a diabolical

mode of conveyance, as the little springs are generally made so strong, in order to bear the terrible bumping they are obliged to undergo, that they only communicate a sort of twittering motion, that gives to an unexperienced person the feeling that his whole body is about to follow the example of his feet, and is going to sleep. But these little machines are exceedingly picturesque, and when drawn by a fine horse, I know of no carriage more graceful in its proportions; however I think it pleasanter to draw them in a description, or a picture, than to be drawn by them over the different hills and hollows of a St. Petersburg pavement. In a common droschky, on whose narrow bench the traveller rides astride, he is frequently pitched right against the garlic loving coachman, who sits just before him; and is generally, before he

can recover his seat assisted back to his proper place by the next rut. Altogether I should advise my friends who go to Russia, to take a drive in a droschky soon after their arrival, in order to try these northern "bounders;" but I think that they will, like the courtly Chesterfield, ask afterwards, whether a man ever underwent the operation twice.

The Russian horses surprised me greatly, as they are generally very handsome, and seem well bred. They bear the strongest marks of Arab descent, and though sometimes light in the carcase, they have excellent heads and limbs, and frequently magnificent trotting action. This is the great merit of a Russian steed, and I should think that they almost rival the Americans in the perfection to which they have brought this pace. In winter there is a great rivalry

among the dandies of St. Petersburg, about their sledge horses, and the most enormous prices are given for a first rate *trotteur*. The pace they go is wonderful, and the horse that generally gallops along side, more for show than for use, sometimes finds it difficult to keep up with one of these noble creatures. The wooden arch over the neck is very light and graceful, and altogether a regular Russian turn out, in either droschky or sledge is very pretty to look at; but as far as comfort is concerned, very indifferent.

The hackney droschkies of St. Petersburg have no fixed tariff of prices, and a regular bargain is always entered into before they start. I was often greatly amused at the manœuvres of the drivers to gain a few more copecks: they come galloping up when they are called; but if they think they have a chance of

obtaining more than is at first offered, they will go on a little way, or turn round a corner, to see whether the man who wishes to have the honor of being driven by them is tired or not; but if they see him still walking on stoutly, they soon come back again, when an agreement is generally made, and away they go with their fare. Boxes are placed in most of the streets for them to feed their horses at, and they generally sleep in summer curled up on the little bench which forms the seat of the carriage; but this is a liberty they dare not take in winter, as, from the intense cold, they would most probably awake in another world.

When the frost regularly sets in, the coachmen of St. Petersburg lead a very severe life, for though there are large fires made in the open streets near the theatres,

and other places of public resort, they suffer dreadfully, and are sometimes known to fall victims to the intense cold. The little postillions who ride the leaders of the carriages of the great, have the hardest time of it, for they are obliged to stay with the equipage while the coachman goes to warm himself, and I am told that they are often seen sitting on the step of a door, rolled up like a hedge hog, in the vain endeavour to obtain sufficient heat to keep them alive; and it is not unusual to find the poor little *vorreiter*, dead at his post, when the carriage is called to take the gay beauty home, from a night of revelry.

The climate of Russia will always be the principal impediment to her advancement and greatness: for six months in the year commerce, agriculture, and military manœu-

vres are quite impossible; the frozen river only serves as a promenade for the gay and pleasure-loving part of the community, the earth is bound in icy hardness, and the soldier is seldom exercised except in a riding school. All communication by sea is completely cut off; the state of the roads is sometimes very uncertain, and a journey in a sledge is not always possible, even in the depth of winter; so with such terrible obstacles to encounter, it is not to be wondered at, that Russia cannot keep pace with other nations in their onward march towards complete civilization, and the long confinement, dreariness, and perpetual monotony of a northern winter must have effect on the temperament and constitution of all who are subjected thereto.

Skating may be great fun, and driving a

sledge a very pleasant amusement, but when a man lives for six months without seeing a green spot, or a flowing stream, his temper, and disposition must become languid, for outward objects, climate, and scenery, have always had great influence on the constitutions of the human race. Peter the Great wanted a port, and a port he made, at an enormous sacrifice; but it never will possess half the advantages in a commercial or political point of view of any of the fourth rate harbours of Europe; and a slight bustle of trade, for four or five months in the year, is all the reward that the children of the first Emperor will ever reap from his unparalleled and almost supernatural exertions.

The government of Russia does not appreciate even the value of the little

trade they already possess; the baneful effects of monopoly is severely felt, as an insuperable bar to speculation; and the merchants of St. Petersburg complain sadly of the great inattention of the government to their interests. Under a more enlightened, commercial policy, the exportation of corn would be enormous, and the consequent return of foreign fabrics would pour wealth and comfort into the country. In no nation is protection of home manufactures carried to a greater extent, and the immense distance that some of the internal productions have to be brought, renders the consumption very limited, and the objects themselves very dear. Thus iron could be imported from England at an infinitely lower rate than it can be brought from the interior, and

it is a curious specimen of clumsy legislation, and the imperfect development of their system; that while unwrought foreign iron is absolutely prohibited, manufactured iron is allowed to come in, free of duty, although the foundries of St. Petersburg are quite equal to perform any work of the kind, however elaborate.

So many anomalies exist in the commercial system of Russia, that speculation is cramped; and either from incompetency or from negligence, the government does not seem to intend to take any steps to remove the disabilities that the merchants of the country at present labour under. All the luxuries, and many of the necessaries of life are as dear in St. Petersburg as in London, the reason of this I cannot comprehend, as the general rate of

duty is very little higher; but I fancy that the real secret of the unhealthy state of the commercial interest in Russia is the incompetency of the rulers to legislate properly in this most important branch of political economy; and it is impossible that men totally unacquainted with the commonest details of trade, can devise measures that would in any way rectify the numerous disadvantages of the present system.

To be a successful minister of commerce requires early devotion to business, and an intimate knowledge of the intricacies of that most difficult subject—two qualities that have seldom been possessed in a very eminent degree by a Russian statesman; and as long as the government of the country is entirely in

the hands of men selected mostly from the highest class of the nobles, a really enlightened commercial minister will in vain be hoped for.

A great number of the merchants of St. Petersburg are English: their ships crowd the docks and harbour of Cronstadt; and I hear that their national aptitude for commerce enables them, even here, to realize a very fair return for their industrious labours. German and other foreign traders abound, and I really believe that the greater part of the commerce of the town is in the hands of strangers, of course naturalized in the country, but still natives of other lands.

During the first week of our stay, we were invited to assist at a manœuvre held

near the camp of Crasnoe Seloe, where we were also promised the long wished for honour of being presented to the Emperor Nicholas. We set out on Thursday evening in a carriage with four horses abreast, and drove to the village—a distance of about twenty-five miles. We found lodgings prepared for us in the house generally allotted to the corps diplomatique, where every thing was provided that we could possibly require. The Swedish Chargé d'Affaires Baron V. kindly took us under his care, and told us many things that were of great use to us.

We rose at five in the morning, and our horror was inexpressible when the first object that greeted our opening eyes was a most determined pour down of rain,

which seemed to have every intention of lasting all day; however we got up and dressed ourselves; at half-past six an aide-de-camp came, when we mounted with the greatest resignation the horses provided for us. I certainly thought that this was to be the last day of our uniforms, as the rain came down in torrents, and I had no cloak that would go over my epaulettes. After waiting some time in a small hospital at the camp, as the manœuvre was deferred in consequence of the wet, the Emperor who had spent the night in a little tent close by, came out, and got on horseback. Every one immediately followed his example, and we were presented in a dirty lane, in the middle of the heaviest part of the day's rain. His Majesty said a few kind words

to us, and then rode on, followed by his whole staff and the small regiment of four hundred Circassians, in their picturesque dresses and mounted on their shaggy little horses.

These mountaineers are as wild in appearance and costume as the animals they bestride; and as the day was so wet they were enveloped in their large, hooded, *bournouse* looking cloaks, under which they carried their bows, quivers, yataghans and other arms. I did not see them perform any of their feats of horsemanship; but I heard that their peculiar exercises are not at all formidable in a military point of view, and partake very much of the nature of "The Scenes in the Circle" seen at Astley's or Franconi's. I was told that the greater number of those we saw on

this day were people of considerable rank among their own tribes, and ought to be considered more as hostages than soldiers of the Imperial army. They looked sorrowful but savage; and I fancied that as they sat on their horses beneath the pouring rain of that northern climate, they appeared forlorn and desolate, thinking probably of their distant sunny valleys and mountain homes, where the only right recognized was that enforced by their own strong arms,—rights that they have so long successfully defended, and for which at that moment their brethren of the Caucasus were gallantly fighting in desperate combat with the comrades of these, their present fellow-soldiers in the corps of the Imperial guard. The Emperor seemed to treat them with all honour, and two Circassian trum-

peters were close to him the whole day, and gave all the signals on their long semi-circular horns.

The war in the Caucasus is decidedly unpopular in Russia, both on account of the ill-success that has hitherto attended her arms in that quarter, and the banishment that it entails on the officers who serve in the army. It is not considered an honour to be thus sent on active service; it is rather regarded in the light of a punishment, and is occasionally used by the government as such. From what I heard in St. Petersburg, I suspect that the hosts yearly employed in the Caucasus are not by any means composed of the flower of the Russian army; and I remarked that it was frequently said, that Prince such a one, or Count so and so,

had been sent to fight in the South, for some trifling peccadillo, or breach of Imperial etiquette. It is not always therefore to an officer's praise, that it is said, that he has been sent to the Caucasus, and if not looked upon as a stigma, it is decidedly considered a bore.

Russia has already wasted a vast amount of treasure, and an incalculable number of lives in vain endeavours to subdue these hardy mountaineers, whose efforts in the cause of freedom have been almost supernatural; for though the whole population of the region wherein the war has been carried on little exceeds a million, yet for a number of years they have succeeded in retaining their independence, and have not only defied, but actually beaten armies whose numbers equalled a tenth of the

population of the whole province. Little is known in Europe of the actual state of things in those distant regions; but the intelligence that reaches our ears only confirms the general opinion, that the war is unnecessary and unjust. It has now become a useless war of extermination, for were the Caucasus to become a part of Russia to-morrow, it would add little to her importance or power; it is certainly the high road to Persia, and Circassia once quieted, the Black Eagle might wave triumphant as it has done once lately, on real oriental soil. But tottering as the Persian Empire is, I hardly think that she can so soon fall an unresisting prey to her ancient enemy, and there are too many powerful interests involved in her integrity, to allow of her becoming a tributary to Russia.

However, while the Circassian holds his hills as his own free land, there is little danger of his mountain passes being made a path to Eastern conquest, and the events of the last autumn, will, it is to be hoped, shew the Russian government the impossibility of gaining a province, the inhabitants of which inherit with a perfect knowledge of their own peculiar mode of warfare, an ancient and inveterate hatred of that power whose mightiest armies have failed in every combat, and succeeded in nought but the desolation of their country.

But to return to our review. Having ridden about three miles, we met some regiments, who were marching towards the ground appointed for the manœuvre, and shortly after the Grand Duke,

Cesarewitch, who commanded one division of the army rode up, followed by his staff, and embraced his father with great warmth. After conversing for a few minutes, they separated, and the manœuvre began.

The army, which was entirely composed of the corps of the guard fifty-six thousand strong, was divided into two parts; one of thirty thousand men being commanded by His Majesty, and the other by the Grand Duke Cesarewitch; the Emperor's army was supposed to be in full retreat, hotly pursued by the Grand Duke; no plan of operation appeared to be determined upon between the two Generals before-hand, but each manœuvred his army as circumstances required; twelve general officers officiated as judges, and were sup-

posed to give their opinions as to the quality of each movement. Altogether it gave us an excellent idea of what a real battle must be, as each army acted independently of one another, and the two commanders seemed to move their great masses of men, like pieces on a chess-board, each playing as best he might.

All the circumstance and minutiæ of a great battle were here practised. The pickets were first driven in by the skirmishers, a few horse charged through the light troops, the heavy guns of the pursued opened upon the advancing columns, and still retreating took advantage of every undulation of the ground to pour in their fire; while under the protection of each battery the infantry advanced or retreated with all the precision of a common

review. As far as we could see, the heights were covered with great moving bodies, clouds of Cossacks hovered on each flank, the heavy artillery thundered along the line, the cavalry charged repeatedly in different quarters, and above all, the din and tumult of this mimic fight, the clear tenor voice of the Emperor was heard as he gave the different words of command with wonderful distinctness.

The manœuvre lasted about four hours, and the retreating army must have passed over about five miles of ground. The Emperor galloped back to the village as hard as he could go, the staff following as best they could, a mode of proceeding which did not appear to suit the ideas of many of the officers who were not quite at home on horseback,

and who evidently were very tired of it. When we reached Crasnoe Seloe, the weather was terrible, the wind and rain had never ceased during the entire day; we were therefore in a miserable plight of wet and mud when we arrived at our quarters.

The troops of the guard which we saw this day, were certainly magnificent, and fifty-six thousand men whose general height is not more than an inch and a half under the standard of our guards, and whose drill is said to be as near perfection as possible, is a wonderful specimen of a *small* part of a nation's army; but we must remember, that these are the picked troops of a host whose numbers are rated at eight hundred thousand, but which are generally supposed to amount to

nearly a million, and that all the energies of one of the greatest soldiers of the age have for many years been devoted to its organization.

Although I bore the uniform of the Kildare Militia bravely through the day, and I hope supported the renown of that ancient and distinguished corps, I cannot say that I am much of a soldier, so do not pretend to give any opinion concerning the military perfections of the great army that we saw at the camp of Crasnoe Seloe; but I was told by an officer of our guards, whom I met afterwards in St. Petersburg, that he never saw steadier infantry, and that the excessive precision of all their movements surprised him greatly. Their guns seemed to be mostly heavier than ours, and the artillery and cavalry were both very well

mounted, and far superior to most of the foreign troops I have seen.

His Majesty dearly loves his reviews, and in summer gives himself up entirely to his troops; he spends three or four days of every week in the camp, and constantly has every regiment out in detail to what they call exercises. He marches them all over the country; and soon after we left the besieged town of Narva, a hundred miles from Crasnoe Seloe, with eighty thousand men!

His I. H. the Grand Duke Michael always assists at these manœuvres both in quality of Commander in Chief of the artillery, and as one of the judges of manœuvre; the imperial family partake of all the temporary hardships of the mimic campaign, and constantly live for days in a little tent about

twelve feet square. The military ardour extends to all grades in Russia, and little is talked of in summer among the gentlemen of St. Petersburg, but "*pipe clay.*"

As soon as we were dry and warmed, we returned to St. Petersburg delighted with this, to us, novel spectacle, and only bemoaning the wet and mud which made us wonder whether our coats would ever become red again.

CHAPTER VIII.

Visit to the Academy of the Corps des Mines—Collection of minerals and precious stones—Mineralogical studies—Mock mines—Academy of arts—Bruloff the Russian painter—Russians deficient in invention—Institutions established for public instruction—Parish and District Schools, Gymnasiums, Universities—Education in private institutions—Domestic instruction—Tutors and governesses—Prohibited books—Rights of authors—Literature in Russia—Advantages of the present system of education.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SCHOOLS.

Que la crainte de Dieu et une solide et patriotique instruction soient la base de toutes les espérances d'amélioration, le premier devoir de toutes les classes.—MANIFESTO OF THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS, JULY 13, 1826.

WE went one day to the Academy of the *corps des mines*, where young men who are intended for the superintendence of the government mines are instructed in the different branches of their profession. In

this institution, they are taught all the science that bears upon the occupation they are destined for; they are then sent with the grade of officers to take charge of the mines, having received the advantages of an excellent general education, as well as perfect instruction in mineralogy, geology, chemistry, &c.

There is in this college a most magnificent collection of minerals, the produce of the different mines in Russia. It is considered the finest in Europe, and contains a number of precious stones, with some masses of gold and platina of immense size. One lump of native gold is said to weigh twenty-nine pounds, and is valued at £26,200; there are also a perfect rock of malachite weighing three thousand seven

hundred pounds, some immense emeralds and beryls, and a host of mineralogical treasures.

Russia at present produces a great quantity of gold of the best quality; it is found at the base of the Oural mountains, in a strata of clay immediately below the surface; the soil is dug out, and by repeated washings, the gold is extracted from it without difficulty. We saw models of the mines, or rather trenches, from whence these riches are raised, and also a fine collection of models of all machinery commonly employed in the different mines of the Oural and Altai mountains.

The students in these schools do not confine their scientific researches to books and upper air, for a series of vaulted passages beneath the building, represent the

galleries of copper and coal mines; the sides and ceilings of these vaults are covered with a composition of real clay, said to have been brought from the distant mines, though to my eye it vastly resembled painted mud; these dark passages were uncommonly cold, and cannot I think materially assist the studies of the future miner. We were taken down into a place like a cellar, where wax candles were lighted and given to us with great solemnity; but after shivering in the dark mock mines for more than a quarter of an hour, we both agreed that these dismal vaults would be much better employed were they put to their more natural use; and that bins well stored with the fair juice of the grape would be more in character with their position. I should not wonder if the majority

of the students would agree with our sage opinion.

We went on, after our liberation from the mines, to the "Academy of Arts," wherein is contained a quantity of pictures and curiosities; none of these are of any note except the picture of the "Last day of Pompeii" by Bruloff, a Russian painter, the only one of his fraternity who has risen to eminence in the art. The picture is very large, and entirely covers one side of a good sized room; though the composition is fine and poetic, the colouring I thought was most disagreeable, and a ghastly hue pervades every face in the picture. The Russians are very proud of this performance, and numbers of students are constantly engaged in copying it in different sizes; but I could not admire it except as being the

sole specimen of any merit existing of the Russian school.

The muses have not yet reached Russia in a body; perhaps they may think both the climate and the people rather cold; the progress of the fine arts in the North is therefore quite imaginary. The national disposition is to imitate; this quality they possess to perfection; but they cannot invent, and all persons who know them well, concur in saying, that as a nation they are peculiarly quick in learning any art; but a Russian must be taught every thing, and he has been rarely known to originate a useful invention, or design a great work.

The greater number of public undertakings are contracted for, and carried on by foreigners. A Frenchman is the first

architect of St. Petersburg; an Italian the best modeller; an American the head engineer of the Moscow and St. Petersburg railway, and a Scotchman the only great iron founder in the city. Therefore, in giving the Russian all credit for his intelligence in imitation and his quickness of perception, I think I am justified in my assertion, that there is a great absence of originality in his national character. This is the more to be wondered at as they possess great educational advantages: for government schools and colleges conducted on most enlightened principles are established in all the principal towns of the Empire.

The department of government directed by the minister of instruction includes the regulation of public and private education

in schools, and domestic instruction. The management of the Imperial Academy, all scientific societies, Libraries, &c. and the censure of all works, Russian, and foreign.

The institutions established for public instruction by government are; first, parish schools for the lower classes, maintained in towns at the expense of government, and in the country at the charge of the proprietor of the land. They are under the immediate surveillance of the priest of the parish; and reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion are the only subjects taught therein. In towns these schools are kept open during the whole year; but in the country they are closed for the summer months, when agriculture occupies the whole rural

population. It is impossible to say to what extent this branch of education is carried on in the country, as it is entirely at the will of the proprietor, that the schools are established and maintained. Their numbers, in consequence, vary considerably in different provinces.

The district schools are open to all classes, and are of a superior order to the institutions last mentioned. They are intended for the instruction of the children of tradespeople and shopkeepers in towns or cities, and are maintained at the expense of government. Five professors are attached to each: one for catechism, one for the Russian tongue, one for arithmetic and geometry, one for geography, and history, and one for engrossing and drawing. The pupils must read, write, and

understand the first four rules of arithmetic, before they can be admitted.

Gymnasiums are colleges established for the purpose of affording education to those sons of gentlemen who cannot continue their studies in universities, and also as preparatory schools for those who intend to enter on an academic course. The course of study is said to embrace all the subjects usually taught at public schools in our own country, and a gymnasium ought to be found in every town of government in the Empire. Pupils educated in these establishments are received into public service with the rank of the 14th class. A boarding-school for the sons of nobility is attached to each gymnasium; these pupils only mix with the general classes in school hours, and directors and

masters are retained for their especial surveillance.

The universities of the Empire are five in number, namely those of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Dorpat, Kasan, and Kharkoff, to these I believe may be added, the institution of St. Vladimir at Kiev. Every university contains three faculties; viz.—those of philosophy, jurisprudence, and medicine. Professors and lecturers are employed for each department, the whole being under the direction of a curator or rector. The course of study occupies a period of four years, when the pupils leave with the rank of the 12th class, and are eligible as officers of the army, or as *employés* in the civil service of the Empire.

This is a short outline of the system of public instruction pursued in Russia;

I fear that though the theory is so good, and the whole so well devised, the plan is but imperfectly developed, and that general public education has not been as successful as these details would lead the reader to imagine. Krusenstern says, "The application of general measures to local exigencies, has been in all times one of the principal difficulties that the administration has had to contend with, in the cares which she has not ceased to extend to the progress of public instruction. To teach the same objects, and after the same manner, on the banks of the Dwina, and the Kama, on the coasts of the Baltic, and the shores of the Caspian; to submit to one plan, and one form, the wants of the different populations composing the Empire, was as difficult to contrive, as it

was unpopular to execute, and perhaps is the cause of the little public confidence, that some of the schools enjoy in the districts wherein they are placed."

Education in private institutions is quite as much regulated and cared for by the government, as it is in the public schools and colleges. This mode of instruction, however, is considerably discouraged by the legislature. The greater number of private schools that have been established are kept by foreigners, to whose care the government have little wish to confide the instruction of their youth; but in spite of all its precaution, this species of education is very fashionable in Russia, and ten years ago, there existed ninety-nine private schools in Moscow, and St. Petersburg. These are now placed under the direction of the

chiefs of the government schools; no books are permitted to be used, except those approved of by the Minister of Public Instruction, and a foreigner cannot open a school in Russia, unless he has been for five years previously a resident in the country, and a naturalized subject of the Czar. Inspectors appointed by the Minister visit them constantly, and the system of education must be the same as that pursued in the government colleges.

These restrictions extend also to domestic instruction, and private tutors and governesses are equally under the surveillance of the Minister. No one can receive into their family, as teacher, a person unprovided with a certificate, stating that he is properly authorized by government to perform the functions of instructor.

The punishment for breaking this law is a heavy fine for Russians, and expulsion from the kingdom for foreigners. Rewards and provision in old age are given by the State to those teachers who have discharged the duties of their profession, with honour and success; those who have served for twenty or twenty-five years, receive the cross of St. Stanislaus with a pension, and in case of their death in poverty, their orphans are brought up at the expense of the Imperial institutions of public instruction. These rewards and privileges do not extend to foreigners not naturalized in Russia.

Young persons are not permitted to leave the country, for the purposes of study, until they have attained the age of eighteen years.

The same motives that prompted these stringent regulations concerning private and domestic instruction have been the cause of the literary censure so rigidly exerted in Russia. Books whether foreign or otherwise, whose contents are found to touch on any of the following subjects are strictly and altogether prohibited; all works written in a spirit hostile to the orthodox Greek Church, her traditions, or her rites, or books containing aught contrary to the truths, or dogmas, of the Christian religion, or subversive of good manners or morality; all publications tending to assail the inviolability of autocratic monarchical power, and the fundamental laws of the Empire, or to diminish the respect or dignity of the Imperial family; all productions that have for their subject attacks on the honour

or reputation of any one by improper expressions, by the publication of circumstances relating to domestic life, or by calumny of any kind whatever.

Committees of censure are found in most of the great towns of the Empire, and are composed of the ordinary professors of colleges directed by the curator of the nearest university, and assisted by officers appointed by government for the purpose. Theological works are submitted to the conferences of the Ecclesiastical authorities of Academies, and in doubtful cases, are referred to the decision of the Holy Synod.

The rights of authors are strictly preserved, and a manuscript during the life of the writer cannot be seized for debt. The heirs of an author or translator enjoy

the value of his works for twenty-five years after his death; but, when that period has expired, the books become public property, and any one who chooses may then print and publish them. All disputes between authors, or between authors and publishers are decided by arbitration, and the fine for literary piracy is laid at the value of twelve hundred copies of the work, whatever it may be.

Literature in Russia is not, however, much on the increase, and the works on most subjects generally in circulation are either translations from foreign publications, or the books themselves in their own language.

I have not had an opportunity of seeing a comparative statement of the difference between the quantity of domestic and foreign

literature at present in circulation; but not very long ago, I find that there were three hundred thousand volumes imported into Russia in one year, and only seven hundred and eighty published in the country.

This short outline of that department of government, conducted by the Minister of Public Instruction, will I hope enable the reader to see under what restrictive rules Russian literature and education are placed: and will also be sufficient to shew how the Czar is in reality the head schoolmaster of his realm. It would be difficult to determine whether the great dearth of literary merit ought to be entirely attributed to the excess of censure or not. I would rather say, that it is more to be traced to the extraordinary use made of the French and German languages by the higher classes.

French is to them more graceful, and more expressive than their own tongue; and so accustomed have they become to foreign literature, that it is doubtful, whether works of merit, in their own language, are either desired or prized.

But the present system of education will, in time, create a more Russian feeling among all classes. It must in the end turn the soft and flowing Sclave into a language of letters. The whole plan is excellent, though its development is still incomplete. Its benefits are becoming yearly more general, and there are at present more than one hundred thousand pupils, receiving instruction at the expense of government,—children of many nations, religions, and tongues.

Krusenstern, in his enthusiasm, exclaims: "The sons of the half savage hordes of Asia

have come to seek softer manners and extended knowledge in Russian colleges; and the most brilliant triumph of the Imperial arms in the East is the establishment of a Russian school at the foot of Mount Ararat."

CHAPTER IX.

Concert given by the Empress—Palace in the park of Peterhof—Presentation to Her Majesty—Her appearance — Her amiable character — Imperial family — The Emperor—Service in the Imperial chapel—Magnificent choir—Park of Peterhof—Dinner at Court—National dishes — Autocratic power — The Empress Catherine—Her maxims—Representative assembly—Efforts of the Emperor to remodel the Russian laws—Russian tribunals—Population of the empire—Anecdote of senatorial corruption — Criminal courts — Russian incongruities.

CHAPTER IX.

THE COURT.

Cum tot sustineas, tanta negotia solus.
VIRGIL.

SHORTLY after our return from the camp, we were honoured with an invitation, from Her Majesty the Empress, to a concert at her small palace of Sniaminsky, in the Park of Peterhof. We drove to Peterhof by a fine road, winding along the shores of the gulf of Finland, and passing many villas, and small domains belonging to the wealthy

citizens. The distance is about thirty versts, and the road excellent; it is for the greater part of the journey *the other* highway of Russia, which leads to Riga, and is of the same dimension and goodness as the one to Moscow.

On our arrival, we found apartments prepared for us in the great palace, and at eight o'clock, a carriage of the Court came to take us to the palace of the Empress. A short drive through the park brought us to a small, handsome building. We were here ushered upstairs; first, into a finely proportioned hall, and then into a lofty square room of simple decorations, where the company were already nearly assembled. We found a party of about eighty persons, consisting principally of the members of the Court.

The Imperial family came in separately, and proceeded into an inner room, where tea was served. We were soon afterwards called into this apartment, and presented by the Emperor himself to her Majesty, who received us most graciously, and asked us many kind questions about our journey, intentions, &c. Her Majesty seemed to suffer much from extreme weakness; her excessive thinness and continual ill-health, has removed much of the beauty she formerly possessed. There was something in her appearance and gentleness of manner, though it could hardly be called a likeness, that reminded me of our own Queen Dowager; and in kindness of disposition and goodness of heart, these illustrious personages may be said to bear a great resemblance.

From all sides, I have heard the same cha-

racter given of her Majesty; not alone from people attached to the Court, whose opinions must of course be considerably biassed—but from persons with whom she has had relations of business. From one in a humble sphere of life, whose employment brought him constantly into personal communication with the illustrious lady, I heard more real praise than could have been uttered by the most fulsome flatterer of the Court. From such authority as this, I loved to hear my previous impressions confirmed, and the honest adulation of an industrious man, whose labours had been rewarded by the discriminating bounty of a good heart, was to my ear sweeter than the most eloquent praise that could ever fall from the honied lips of a courtier.

The waning health of the Empress is a source of great uneasiness to her attached

family, and to all who are honoured with her friendship. Her's would be an irreparable loss to her children and to Russia; but it is to be hoped, that her Majesty's late journey to the soft climate of Italy has, with God's blessing, restored this invaluable life to her country. In St. Petersburg, her illness is generally deplored, and her state of health is invariably spoken of with unfeigned sorrow and pity; notwithstanding that the author of "Russia in 1839," declares that it is a subject never alluded to in society, I have heard it repeatedly discussed with deep commiseration for her present sufferings, and with expressions of the most ardent hope for her future restoration.

The Imperial family of Russia are all excessively handsome; and I never have seen

beauty more evenly distributed among the children of one house, in any rank of life. The Grand Duchess Olga, is the prettiest woman in Russia, and each of her brothers and sisters is gifted in the same manner. I had the honour of seeing them all, with the exception of the Grand Duke Constantine, who was absent in the Mediterranean. But even among the youthful branches of a family so famous for beauty, the Emperor shines preeminent, as well by the majesty of his deportment, as by the Jove-like beauty of his countenance. Towering over every one in the room, his well-proportioned figure glided through the crowd; and the extraordinary grace of his manner, is only equalled by the superiority of his manly form. A kind word, a cheerful remark, or a glad smile, greeted and delighted

every person he addressed; while with rare talent, he seemed to unite in one, the host, the master, and the companion.

Never in any rank of life, have I seen a man so admirably fitted for the position in which he is placed; and when we consider what that position is—the absolute monarch, the wielder of the destinies of a seventh part of the habitable globe—we must think him great indeed, on whom such a dignity can suitably rest. His eagle eye, on this night, wandered over the room. He directed everything even to the smallest minutiæ; while never, for a moment, could I detect a movement or a gesture, unworthy the dignity of the Emperor. Truly Nicholas is the first gentleman of the age.

His Majesty spoke to us frequently during the evening, graciously expressed his desire

that we should see everything worthy of note in Russia, and seemed really anxious that we should enjoy our tour. He laughed good-humouredly, at the dreadful wetting we had all experienced on the day of the manœuvre, and promised us a review on a larger scale, after our return from Moscow. This kindness we were unfortunately unable to avail ourselves of, as our stay in Russia was so limited. I am unused to Courts, and have been bred far from the circle of royal favour, but a few moments' conversation with this man, who seemed to us a gentleman formed by nature's own hand, removed all the diffidence natural to one unaccustomed to live in the presence of the mighty of the earth.

So far did the magic of his manner influence my mind, that, seeing in this illustrious personage, one who expressed an interest in

our welfare with such grace and presence, I found that all feeling of *gêne* quickly disappeared; and I might have almost forgotten that he who addressed the wanderer with so much ease and affability, was really the mighty and all-powerful Czar.

The concert lasted two hours. Tamburini sang, and there were some other professional people, who played very well on the violincello and pianoforte. Supper was served on a number of little round tables, as is usual in Russia, and the Imperial family sat without form among the company at different tables. Shortly after the party broke up, and we returned to our apartments with feelings of great pleasure, in thus having seen, in their own house, the members of this illustrious family, and at having experienced from their hands, so much kindness and condescension.

The next morning being Sunday, we were invited to attend the service in the Imperial chapel, where we appeared in full dress at eleven o'clock. We found the whole Court, and most of the officers of the Chevalier Guard, in their beautiful white uniform, waiting in an ante-room for the entrance of the Imperial family. They soon came, and we all followed to a small but handsome chapel of the palace. The Emperor wore a white Prussian uniform, in honour of Prince Charles of Prussia, the brother of the Empress, who was staying here, and whose birthday it happened to be.

The service immediately commenced, and mass was celebrated by two priests, with flowing hair and long beards, who were clothed in magnificent vestments. As the service was entirely in Russian, I could not understand one word of what was going on. The

entire liturgy was chaunted, and at one part the censer was swung by the priest before each of the Imperial family, (beginning with his Majesty,) who crossed themselves most devoutly during the ceremony. But the great beauty of the service consists in the magnificent voices and excellent singing of the Imperial choir. By the rules of the Greek Church, no instrument, whatever, is admitted to their rites of worship; but the absence of that usual addition to sacred music was amply atoned for by the superb manner in which these choristers sang. The choir consisted of between thirty and forty men and boys, the harmony of whose voices and the general excellence of whose singing surpassed any sacred music I ever heard. I have been to the far-famed Sistine chapel; but in my opinion, the music

of the Vatican is not to be compared to this magnificent choir; I am sure that, where there are so many first-rate bass voices, the absence of an instrument in sacred song is rather an advantage; for never, in church or hall, have I heard strains more powerful and melodious,

> From the full choir in loud Hosannas rise,
> To swell the pomp of dreadful sacrifice.

If ever music raised the soul to the contemplation of the Great Creator by the harmony of sweet sounds, that which I heard pealing through the gilded chapel on this morning, would awe the heart, and turn the coldest mind to thoughts of thanksgiving.

The Empress came in during the service; being unable, on account of weakness, to remain during the whole ceremony. At the end, the priest came up and kissed her Majesty's hand, when the whole party

returned to breakfast in one of the rooms of the palace. This meal, from the hour, and the dishes that were served, resembled more our luncheon than breakfast. After it was over we returned to our rooms, and having taken off our uniforms, went out to take a walk in the Park of Peterhof. This is very pretty; it occupies a high bank, sloping down towards the sea, and is laid out with much taste in terraces, straight walks, handsome flights of steps and waterworks. The Sampson fountain in front of the palace is a magnificent *jet d'eau,* eighty feet high, and from it to the gulf, (a distance of about 500 yards,) runs a straight canal, wherein are many smaller fountains; at the end of this there is generally a steamer, and a couple of small frigates lying. Many summer-houses and little palaces are dispersed about the park;

and among the prettiest may be reckoned the "Cottage," where the Empress usually resides when at Peterhof. The whole demesne is kept in excellent order, and is a perfect prodigy in Russia, on account of the steep banks and undulations of the ground.

We dined with the Court at four o'clock: none of the Imperial family were present, as they dined in private at the Cottage. The dinner was excellent, and very well served in the Russian manner; some tall negroes, who attended in their rich dresses, gave an oriental appearance to the scene. I was told that the attendance of these blacks at all the feasts of the Court, was first introduced by the great Catherine, and the custom has been kept up ever since. Most of the *entrées* were very good; but the unwary Englishman will sometimes stumble on a national dish, served up

to suit the palates of "old Russia." This is generally a terrible mess. I took some very good looking green soup, called "*badvinieh*," (I'll not answer for the correctness of the name) but to my astonishment, I found it an iced mixture of salmon, parsley, pickled cucumbers and vinegar, instead of what I expected it to be, good hot pea soup! It was not nice, so I with difficulty swallowed the first mouthful, and put down my spoon with so serious a face, that it caused great merriment to all near me. They have an odd custom in Russia, of handing round in the waiting room, before dinner, liqueurs together with biscuits, little bits of cheese, chicken, caviare, and cold liver, by way of a whet to the appetite. I followed the example of all, and tried it; but as eating never made me hungry, I fared no better than Lord Byron's Scotchman, who

eat six kittiwakes to give him an appetite, and complained at the end of the sixth, that his hunger was in no-wise increased. So I cannot recommend the experiment, as I unfortunately pitched upon a bit of chicken and cold liver, which latter condiment was not at all nice.

The party consisted of about sixty, being composed of the officers and ladies of the Court, and a few visitors like ourselves. The ladies were very agreeable, gay, and good-natured; and life, at the Russian Court, seems to be in general a continued round of pleasure and amusement. During this last year, however, the untimely and melancholy deaths of the two Grand Duchesses has completely prevented all gaiety, and in consequence, the great annual fête of Peterhof, has not been celebrated

this season. When dinner was over, we walked out again, and went with the Court to the French Theatre in the evening. After supper, we took leave of Imperial splendour and hospitality, and returned to our hotel in St. Petersburg.

The labours of him, to whom fortune decrees the crown of the Czars, must be so varied, so numerous, and arduous, that it is impossible to conceive how one individual possessing even the highest degree of talent, can find time to discharge the multifarious duties of such an office. Born the absolute ruler of this mighty empire, he is, at once the source of all power, the heart and life of the Russian Constitution, the root of every branch of its administration; by virtue of his crown, sole Head of the Church, sole Generalissimo of his

countless armies, sole Legislator of his boundless realms, and the last authority for appeal, in every department of legal jurisdiction. Those famous words of Louis XIV. "*L'Etat c'est moi*," that have been handed down to posterity, as an expression of such arrogance and presumption, may be said to apply literally and without exaggeration to the Constitution of Russia. What knowledge, what courage, what penetration, what self-command it must require to successfully wield so God-like a power! On the breath of the Czar hangs the welfare or the misery of millions; on his word depends the very existence of nations; he may summon to his counsels the great and the wise of the land, they may assist his deliberations, and further his designs; but on his head alone the awful respon-

sibility rests; and though no earthly power may control his will, so pious a man as the present Emperor is said to be, must often consider with awe the account he will have one day to render to the King of Kings.

We, as Englishmen, cannot think an autocratic government to be according to the will of God, or calculated to promote the best interests of mankind; but still that may not prevent us from seeing the difficulty of the position of the autocrat, and from yielding all homage to such measures, edicts, or institutions of his government, as are calculated to produce the happiness of the virtuous, and the just punishment of the wicked. Although many parts of the system are good in theory, I cannot dare to impress on the minds of my reader, that justice is in this empire equally and

rightly administered; but I conceive that the cause of this is to be found more often in the conduct of persons forming the Russian executive, than in the character of the great ruler himself.

It is impossible that a government, whose members are all to be considered in the light of underlings, should be endued with the lofty tone or the high *morale* of rulers, who are answerable to, and in direct connection with an assembly representative of the whole nation.

A kingdom cannot be properly governed by men who are, at best, but servants of an Emperor,—mere parts, and not directors of the great machine. However immense a man's talents may be; however unwearied his efforts; however ardent his desire to do good, he cannot solely and unaided, administer rightly the

affairs of a wide-spreading realm, or sufficiently superintend the proper working of each department of government. Men are not to be found in the world to whose care matters involving such mighty interests can with safety be committed unless they are rendered amenable to the grand law of opinion, and own a higher rule, a holier power than the arbitrary will of one man. The great master may condemn fraud, and severely punish political profligacy; but the punishment is rarely commensurate with the offence, and the chastisement of a wrong-doing minister of an autocrat bears the same relation to that of the ruler of a free State, as does the flogging of a schoolboy to the condemnation of a jury. Thus it is that the servants of the Czar appear to have little of the high and independent

spirit that politicians of other countries either possess or assume; and from the time of Peter, (when as Voltaire says "*La Russie fut formée,*") the ministers of the Imperial crown have appeared to the world, more in the light of favourites than rulers.

A system of legislation was first developed by the great Catherine, previous to whose reign, the principal law in Russia was, the "strongest hand uppermost;" and tyranny and venality were generally exercised by all the functionaries of the government. But Catherine, who in spite of all her faults, appears to have been endued with a greater liberality of idea and a deeper respect for the opinion of the people than any sovereign who ever sat on the Imperial throne, resolved to add fresh glory to her name, by becoming a legislator. She convened a

sort of representative assembly at Moscow, and deputies were summoned from all the provinces of Russia, however remote. It was curious to see the men of so many nations differing so immensely in language, religion, and habits, assembled to give their opinions concerning the laws that they and theirs were henceforward to obey. No rule had they hitherto been taught to revere but the power of God, the will of the Empress, and the might of their own strong arms; they were now suddenly called from their distant homes to regulate their future conduct by statutes and commandments.

Catherine opened the proceedings with great pomp, and caused the instructions she had already drawn up, to be read to the assembled States. These had been entirely

written in French by her own hand; the opinions expressed therein being drawn from the works of Montesquieu, and other French philosophers. The maxims contained in that small code, exhibit an extraordinary perception of the fundamental principles of government, with an ardent (and for the time) a wonderful desire for the establishment of a pure and righteous system of legislative justice.

Such maxims as the following having emanated from the pen of such a woman as Catherine, may serve to show how enlightened was her policy, and how little her ideas have been since carried out by the Russians themselves.

"The spirit of the nation itself ought to be considered in the framing of laws."

"Laws should be considered no otherwise than as a means of conducting mankind to the greatest happiness."

"The liberty of the subject ought only to be restricted in that which it would be disadvantageous to him to do."

What a knowledge of the real principles of law-making the following instruction exhibits:

"In cases purely civil, the laws should be so clear and precise, that the judgments resulting from them should be always in perfect uniformity in the same cases, in order to remove that *jurisprudence of decision* which is so often a source of uncertainties, of errors, or acts of injustice, according as a cause has been well or ill defended at one time or at another, gained or lost according to influence or circumstances."

Again she shows how she based her new principles on an accurate knowledge of the tempers and natures of men; for after expressing in explicit but wary terms her approbation of the measure for emancipating the serfs, she thus expresses her opinions on the subject of national change and advancement.

"It is the business of the legislator to follow the temper of the nation; for we do nothing better than what we do voluntarily, and in pursuance of our natural disposition. For establishing a more perfect legislation, it is necessary that the minds of men should be prepared for it. But in order to defeat the pretext usually alleged, that it is not possible to do good because the minds of men are not yet disposed to admit it, we must take the pains to prepare them

for it; this will be already a great step advanced. Where it is intended to make any great changes in a nation that may turn to its benefit, that which has been established by laws should be reformed by laws, and what custom has brought into practise should be changed by custom; for it is bad policy to change by laws what ought to be changed by custom."

But notwithstanding all these real or apparent attempts made by the Empress for the reformation of the laws, and the improvement of the condition of the peasantry, the meetings of this representative body nearly became the cause of a civil war; for while the peasants were preparing to support their claims, and the expressed opinions of the Empress by force; the nobility who feared an insurrection, and above all a

reduction of their revenues, protested in the most vehement manner against the measure, and many declared, that they would destroy any senator who should be bold enough to propose the enfranchisement of the serf.

Notwithstanding this, one of the richest men in Russia, Count Schrematoff, openly proposed the emancipation of the slaves, offering to set the example himself by giving freedom to one hundred thousand peasants; whereupon a debate of such extraordinary warmth ensued, that the angry deputies were all sent home in disgrace—a measure necessary to prevent a disturbance of the public peace. They decreed to the Empress the titles of Great, Wise, Prudent, and Mother of the Country, and by their own turbulent spirit they ended the deliberations of the only representative assembly that ever sat

in Russia for the purposes of open legislation.

These events took place nearly eighty years ago, but the same opinions still exist among the nobles concerning the emancipation of the slaves. Though the Emperor sets the example by giving freedom to the peasants on all the lands of the crown, a law obliging the proprietors to abolish this disgraceful institution would be still met with almost universal disapprobation, if not with open resistance.

The Emperor Nicholas has given up much of his time to the remodelling of the Russian laws, many of the ancient statutes have been abridged and one hundred quarto volumes of laws, ordonnances, &c., are said to be the result of his labours. But while so clumsy a system of administration exists,

the law-maker may toil in vain; for the plurality of courts, the number of senators, functionaries &c., who dispense justice, and the venality of all the lower and many of the greater officers of the crown, render law more expensive and uncertain in Russia than in any other country.

The assemblies and courts that in Russia meet for the despatch of public business are: first, the council of the Empire which was originally intended only to direct the making and administering of laws, but is now also erected into a supreme court of judicature. This assembly is composed of the ministers and highest nobles of the realm, and the Emperor has a perfect right of veto.; this is sometimes so far exercised as to confirm the decision of the minority.

Secondly, the General Assembly of the Senate. This is a court of appeal from the inferior courts of the departments of the Senate. A majority of two thirds of the body is necessary to obtain a decision; thus it may happen that the members may have three or four opinions on one subject, in which case, their deliberations are not likely to come to a certain issue. The minister of justice has the same power of veto on the judgments of this assembly, as the Emperor has on those of the Great Council, and in like manner, may annul the judgment altogether, or confirm the decision of the minority. Thirdly, the departments of the Senate. In these courts unanimity of the members is necessary to form a judgment, but this is not all that is required; the Attorney

General must confirm the decision by his approval, and, may, if it does not agree with his opinions send the whole affair back to the court for a reversion of their judgment; if the senators refuse to alter their verdict, the cause goes up to the general assembly of the Senate. Fourthly, the Tribunals of governments. There are elective assemblies; their decisions are regulated by the plain majority of votes; but these are subject to the interference of the departments of the Senate, who at the instance of one of the parties concerned, can annul their decisions, and take the whole affair into their own hands. There are also tribunals of districts, the lowest of the civil courts. One exists in each district, and its constitution resembles that of the tribunals of governments.

But besides these a nondescript assembly has been instituted; a court of inquisition on the judgments of the general assembly and departments of the Senate. It is called the Commission of Requests: this was first intended to be a court of inquiry into petitions forwarded to the Emperor, but is now made a court of inquiry into the decisions of the general assembly, and the departments of the Senate, whose judgments they can annul, and refer the affair in both instances to the arbitration of the superior court. The proceedings in all these courts are entirely conducted in writing, and in no Russian legal assembly publicity or oral pleading exists. An affair must be always commenced in the lower courts and may rise step by step until the litigating parties

find themselves within the jurisdiction of the council of the Empire. The pleadings are always executed by *employés* of the Senate; they are therefore made as voluminous as possible and may sometimes reach the extraordinary magnitude of eight thousand sheets; an amount of engrossing which far surpasses the most romantic aspiration ever formed by an ambitious solicitor of Lincoln's Inn.

The administration of every public office is deputed to an endless number of functionaries of different grades. This is more surprising, as the number of subjects whose rank enables them to bring their affairs within the jurisdiction of the higher courts, is very small.

The population of the empire, exclusive of Poland and Lithuania, is estimated at fifty-

three million five hundred thousand, of whom twenty-seven million are serfs, belonging to private individuals, and fifteen million are peasants of the crown; this, therefore leaves but eleven million five hundred thousand persons, who are in the enjoyment of civil rights, and with whom the government is actually brought in contact.

The serfs of private individuals are under the absolute control of their respective masters; and, therefore, give the government very little trouble; while the peasants of the crown, are ruled by a system of organization peculiar to themselves, and separate from the regular government of the country.

Now of these eleven million five hundred thousand, who are not serfs, but seven hundred and fifty-one thousand are of a

grade sufficiently high to allow them to bring their affairs into the Senate, namely:

Of the nobility	350,000
Of the clergy	273,000
Of the merchants of three classes .	128,000
Total	751,000

so that in reality, the officers of the higher Courts of the empire are employed entirely in the affairs of seven hundred and fifty-one thousand persons! We may judge of the quantity of business transacted, and of the efficiency of the legislative sytem, by the fact, that in 1842, there were four thousand two hundred and twenty-six affairs not decided, and passed on to the next year.

Who then could tell what the consequence would be, if by any means the forty-two

million of serfs were at once to receive their liberty and become free citizens qualified to partake of an equal share of civil rights. Anarchy must ensue. If the present system of government with difficulty administers the affairs of seven hundred and fifty-one thousand people, could it ever rule a nation? All should be remodelled, every thing should be changed. It would be not only an alteration of the public institutions of the country—it would be a revolution. No one branch of the judicial system would be found sufficiently pure, simple, or powerful for its office. The task would be Herculean. A task worthy of a Lycurgus, a Numa, or a Washington; It would be the formation of a nation.

But to return to the present state of Russia. The great officers of the highest civil Courts are not always appointed in

consequence of having exhibited qualities calculated to fit them for the arduous duties they are expected to perform. They are usually chosen after the prime of life, when they may have risen to eminence, either in the army, diplomacy, or the civil service at home. It is not therefore surprising, that the people should complain of the expense and the uncertainty of Russian justice, and of the terrible corruption that exists in every branch of the administration; for old men, unused to give their minds to any subjects, except those of manœuvring an army, or outwitting a diplomatist, cannot be expected to form a right judgment on a question of civil law, whose tortuous windings are enrolled in eight thousand sheets of parchment. Or, a minister, however upright, cannot prevent the most extensive venality, when every part

of an affair is conducted in secret by government *employés*.

Many merchants in Russia lamented bitterly, in my hearing, the iniquitous corruption of the courts of law; and told me that no cause can ever be brought to a successful termination, without a DECENT and PROPER administration of bribes.

But justice even in Russia sometimes finds out the wicked, as is instanced by the following story, often told at St. Petersburg.

A poor woman, having an affair of much importance under litigation in one of the courts, was given to understand that the cause could never be brought to a satisfactory termination without a present to a senator of 20,000 roubles. Horror-struck at this, and seeing no chance of procuring the immense

sum, and thus terminating the expensive law-suit, she one day addressed the Emperor in the street, and begged him to lend her 20,000 roubles. His Majesty is said to have questioned her as to what she could want with so large a sum, and having heard her story gave her the money, privately marked by himself. The poor woman immediately made the corrupt judge the required present. The Emperor, shortly after met the Senator, and begged of him to lend him some money; the wretched man, without hesitation, put some of the spoil of the poor woman into his Majesty's hand. He recognised his own money! The Senator is said to have disappeared.

The criminal courts in Russia are purely magisterial; there is never an attempt at pleading made, and the infliction of punish-

ment rests very much in the power of the judge; great licence is allowed to the police,—a most important and powerful arm of imperial government. There is, I believe, no doubt of an extensive organization of a secret system, but what the constitution of this Russian A division, this great detective force is, I have no idea.

The infliction of summary punishment on small offenders by the petty officers of the police, is quite common in St. Petersburg. Our servant one day happened to cross the river in a boat, and gave the boatman more than treble his fare (for the boatmen unlike their brethren of the droschky have a regular tariff); the man insisted on more, and as our servant walked away, the bearded mugik caught hold of him, and endeavoured to detain him by force; whereupon he, of course,

instantly knocked him down. A crowd collected, and the boatman was taken to the police office. The officer asked our servant one or two questions, and without the slightest hesitation, put the boatman into a sort of stocks, and gave him twenty-five blows with a long stick, as hard as ever the man could lay them on. The whole affair did not last more than five minutes; the crime was committed, and the culprit punished so severely, that he with difficulty walked away; the crowd dispersed, and it was evidently considered by the whole party as an every day occurrence.

By this short outline of the principles of the civil and criminal law of Russia, my readers may judge how imperfectly the great designs of Catherine have been advanced by her successors.

The incongruity of every thing either physical or material in Russia, forms perhaps the greatest wonder of this extraordinary country. It is also the greatest difficulty that authors have to contend with in their attempts to describe the institutions and state of the Empire. We see perfectly devised and well developed plans of government placed among a most tangled web of complicated and clumsy political institutions. We see one race of men enjoying all the benefits and exhibiting all the graces of enlightened education, while the other and inferior class are sunk in deep ignorance, rudeness, and slavery. We see the palace towering by the cabin, the rod of bondage lying beside the sceptre of righteousness. The rivers flow at one moment among stately [redacted]

and Grecian porticos; at another wander through the savage forest and uncultivated morass. All is incongruous; the social edifice is yet unbuilt, and the materials for its erection lie in splendid confusion on desert ground. De Stael truely compares Russia to one of Shakspeare's plays, wherein "all that is not faulty is sublime, all that is not sublime is faulty."

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